

Annual Training 2013 Edition

# Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Governor selects Bohac for state's top Guard post

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Nebraska's 33rd adjutant general is no stranger to the issues currently facing the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Daryl Bohac was selected by Gov. Dave Heineman to succeed Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons as the Nebraska National Guard adjutant general.

Prior to being promoted to the rank of major general and assuming the position during a July 14 change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Bohac had served as the deputy adjutant general as well as the assistant adjutant general, Air.

According to Heineman, who announced his selection during a July 8 news conference at the state capitol, Bohac's experience gained over a 35-year military career, of which 31 were spent in the Nebraska Air National Guard, were significant factors in his decision.

"As adjutant general, (then Brig. Gen.) Bohac brings a variety of experiences, both as a traditional member and a full-time member of the Nebraska National Guard, and with the Army and Air National Guard," said Heineman.

"I've worked with Brigadier General Bohac on a variety of issues and I know he will be an outstanding adjutant general for the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency."

Bohac, 52, will lead the more than 4,600 members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard while also serving as the



Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac

director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

"When we look at General Bohac's record, you see a distinguished record of service," said Heineman. "I've worked with him most recently in his role as the assistant adjutant general and deputy adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard. He knows how to get things done. I'm very impressed with his leadership skills."

"And one thing that is very, very important to the Guard... he cares about the men and women serving and their families," Heineman added. "So those were the reasons."

Bohac, a native of Malcolm, Neb., who now lives in Waverly, Neb., first joined the military in 1978 when he enlisted into the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves as a member of the Omaha-based 4th Engineering Maintenance Company. He later transferred to the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Resource Management Squadron's Vehicle Maintenance Branch.

He received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Nebraska

See BOHAC on 6.



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**Passing Of The Colors:** Gov. Dave Heineman presents the organizational colors of the Nebraska National Guard to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, July 14, as Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, outgoing adjutant general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, state command sergeant major, look on.

## Guard welcomes new adjutant general during ceremonies at Lincoln air base

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton  
Staff Writer

Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac assumed command of the Nebraska National Guard July 14, becoming just the third Air Force officer in the history of the Nebraska National Guard to command the organization.

Bohac, who will serve as the commander of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard as well as the director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, accepted the colors of the organization from Gov. Dave Heineman after the organization's 32nd adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, relinquished them in a ceremony steeped in military symbolism.

Change of command ceremonies predate the Norman conquest of England and are steeped in tradition and rich in military history. In a military ritual punctuated by silence, Airmen and Soldiers from the Nebraska National Guard stood in formation with a massing of colors and representatives

See CHANGE OF COMMAND on 6.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Second Star:** Gov. Dave Heineman pins the rank of major general onto the collar of Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac while Bohac's wife, Kristie, watches, at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14, prior to a change of command ceremony where Bohac took command of the Nebraska National Guard.

## Guard Soldiers help provide humanitarian assistance during Black Hills annual training

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 734th Transportation Battalion had the opportunity to make a very real difference when they participated in a timber hauling mission during their June 8-22 annual training in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Participating in the annual Golden Coyote exercise, not only did the Nebraska Guard Soldiers receive real-life transportation training during a timber hauling mission to several Indian reservations in South Dakota, they also helped keep the national forest healthy.

According to Lt. Col. Curtis Abendroth, com-

See TIMBER HAULING on 12.



Photo by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Hitting The Road:** Trucks from the 1074th Transportation Company filled with timber make their way to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota during the unit's annual training, June 14.

## Federal technicians see unpaid furloughs shortened to six days

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Nebraska National Guard federal technicians received a bit of good news, Aug. 6, when Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced that the Defense Department was reducing the number of unpaid days off these full-time employees would have to take from 11 to six.

Nationally, the furloughs, which began on July 8, affected more than 650,000 Defense Department civilian employees. In the Nebraska National Guard, the furloughs affected 587

fulltime employees, including 563 dual-status military technicians, meaning that while these employees are paid and receive benefits as federal technicians, they are required to wear uniforms and maintain their status as members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, according to Maj. Ed Davis, deputy Human Resources officer.

For the bulk of these employees, the furloughs meant taking each Monday off without pay.

According to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, the furloughs had a consid-

See FURLOUGHES on 4.

### Inside

Nebraska National Guard mom helping family race to the top  
See story and photos on 3.



Nebraska Air Guard performs rare refueling mission  
See story and photos on 10.



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# NEWS DIGEST

## ■U.S. on track in Afghanistan, military leaders tell Senate

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Despite Taliban resistance, U.S. military objectives in Afghanistan are on track, senior U.S. military leaders told the Senate Armed Services Committee, July 18.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey and Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. told the committee during their reconfirmation hearing that the International Security Assistance Force mission is on track to achieve its objectives in Afghanistan and end its mission by 2015. President Barack Obama nominated Dempsey and Winnefeld for second terms as chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Dempsey told the senators that Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the ISAF commander, said he will achieve his campaign objectives in developing the Afghan security forces. “Now, he does also acknowledge there are some potential gaps that he will have better clarity on after this fighting season,” Dempsey said.

The chairman and vice chairman told the senators that they have given their recommendations for the size of a residual force the United States will leave in Afghanistan post-2014.

“We’ve provided several options,” Dempsey said. “As the Joint Chiefs, we have made a recommendation on the size, and we’ve also expressed our view on when that announcement would best meet the campaign objectives.”

The United States and Afghanistan must finalize a bilateral security arrangement – with legal protections for American service members — before a decision is made. Dempsey said he would stress this when he meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Dempsey told the senators he seeks opinions about Afghanistan. “Besides speaking with General Dunford on a weekly basis and visiting him about quarterly, I also reach out to as many other people as I can possibly reach out to who can give us other views,” he said.

All these reports align, the chairman added.

Having American troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014 is crucial to success in the country, Dempsey said.

“Although I’ve told you that the progress of the security forces has been significant,” he added, “they would not have the level of confidence to sustain themselves over time if it happens that precipitously.”

## ■Hagel announces planned cuts to headquarters staffs

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Pentagon leaders will reduce their staffs by 20 percent as the Defense Department works to craft a strategy-based spending plan that accounts for likely future spending cuts, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said, July 16.

Speaking to reporters at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., during a three-day visit to military installations in the Southeast, Hagel said his office and those of the chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and the service chiefs

will cut headquarters staffs by one-fifth from 2015 to 2019.

Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said in a July 16 written statement that total savings from the reduced staffing could reach \$1.5-2 billion.

“Secretary Hagel’s announcement is based on the work of the Strategic Choices and Management Review, which scrutinized the department’s spending priorities and determined that these headquarters reductions should be pursued now, regardless of future fiscal circumstances,” Little said. “These cuts will be implemented even if Congress lifts sequester-level budget caps.”

In meetings with service members and civilians throughout his travels this week, the secretary has stressed that defense leaders are planning for the full range of sequester cuts that could total \$500 billion in defense spending reductions over a decade.

“Uncertainty is a tremendous enemy for all of us, for obvious reasons,” Hagel said. “I’ve got to prepare this institution and our people for the facts of life and the reality as it is and the law that is now in place.”

Hagel said his major objective for the review the department conducted earlier this year was to prepare for probable future cuts. In a letter to the Senate last week, the secretary outlined possible force cuts and civilian reductions in force that may ensue if sequester remains in place beyond the current fiscal year.

The secretary noted that reducing defense spending in postwar periods is normal.

“In our history, we’ve had to go through this three or four times since World War II,” Hagel said. “The difference now is more uncertainty and the reality that we’re facing a steeper, deeper, more abrupt cut than probably ever before.”

## ■Biden: Asia-Pacific rebalance promotes prosperity, security

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Emphasizing that economic development and peace and stability are intertwined, Vice President Joe Biden said July 18 that the goal of the increased U.S. focus and engagement in the Asia-Pacific region is to make it not only more secure, but more prosperous as well.

Biden spoke to a Center for American Progress forum at George Washington University before leaving the next week for economic and strategy discussions in India and Singapore.

The security the United States has provided over the past 60 years “has enabled the region’s people to turn their talents and hard work into an economic miracle,” Biden said. “Now, we want to hasten the emergence of an Asia-Pacific order that delivers prosperity for all the nations involved.”

The U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region reflects the importance of a region that, despite remarkable promise, struggles with uncertainty and risk, the vice president said. “We are focused on the risks of disruption of commerce, proliferation, humanitarian disasters, conflict between nations and the persistent threat caused by North Korea,”

# Navrkal selected to lead 35th Infantry Division

By Sharon Watson

Kansas National Guard

TOPEKA, Kan. – Maj. Gen. Lee Tafaneli, Kansas adjutant general, named Brig. Gen. Michael D. Navrkal to succeed Maj. Gen. John E. Davoren as the commander



Navrkal

of the 35th Infantry Division, July 3. Davoren is retiring with 37 years of military service. The change of command is scheduled to occur on Oct. 5, 2013, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Navrkal currently serves as the assistant adjutant general for the Nebraska Army National Guard. He is also the deputy commanding general for operations, First United States Army Division West and is responsible for conducting training readiness oversight and mobilization of designated active, National Guard and reserve component forces.

“It will take a leader of considerable experience and knowledge to replace Major General Davoren,” said Tafaneli. “I am confident that Brigadier General

Navrkal possesses those qualifications and I am certain the division will continue to excel in its missions under his leadership.”

“Brigadier General Navrkal brings a wealth of command and leadership experience to this position,” said Maj. Gen. Judd H. Lyons, then-Nebraska adjutant general. “He is an excellent choice for the 35th ID commander.”

“I am honored to be selected as the next commander of this outstanding unit,” said Navrkal. “The 35th Infantry Division has such a great tradition of service to this nation and I look forward to serving with the outstanding Soldiers who make up the division.”

Navrkal received his commission from the Officer Candidate Course at Fort Benning, Ga., on June 5, 1981. He has commanded at the company, battalion and brigade levels.

Navrkal commanded Company A, 2nd Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment, 67th Infantry Brigade and the 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion. Navrkal deployed to Iraq as commander of the 867th Corps Support Battalion from 2006-07, leading an organization of 1,700 Soldiers providing logistical support.

Most recently, he served as commander of 92nd Troop Command.

The 35th Infantry Division, headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, is comprised of Soldiers from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Illinois.

he told the audience.

Standing up to these challenges, he said, requires strong alliances, institutions and partnerships that tie regional countries together so they work together toward goals that benefit all. They also promote understanding and avenues for countries to peacefully resolve differences, he added.

Toward this end, the United States wants to be a partner in creating “21st-century rules of the road” that would clarify acceptable international behavior, Biden said. Such rules would extend from economic to security issues, benefitting “not only the United States and the region, but the world as a whole.”

Recognizing maritime disputes in the South China Sea, Biden urged China and the Association of South East Asian Nations to work more closely toward a code of conduct establishing universally acceptable standards of international behavior.

“That means no intimidation, no coercion, no aggression and a commitment from all parties to reduce the risk of mistakes and miscalculation,” he said. “It is in everyone’s interest that there be freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce, respect for international laws and norms and a peaceful resolution of territorial disputes.”

Biden also cited broad agreement that North Korea’s nuclear missile program “pres-

ents a clear and present danger to stability,” particularly in East Asia. The United States is working closely with Japan, South Korea, China and Russia to get North Korea to stop these activities, he said.

The vice president also expressed the U.S. willingness to engage directly with North Korea, but only, he emphasized, if it agrees to “genuine” negotiations and commits to giving up its nuclear ambitions.

“North Korea can have peace and prosperity like the rest of the region, but only without nuclear weapons,” he said. “We are open to engaging with any nation that is prepared to live up to its international obligations.”

As the United States expands its engagement in the region, Biden called its longstanding alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand the cornerstones of the strategy. “Across the board, with these alliances, we are at a high-water mark in terms of cooperation between our leaders, both military and political, and the support of our people,” he said.

He emphasized, however, that the rebalance does not mean the United States is losing its focus on the Middle East and Europe.

“We are not leaving Europe,” he said. “Europe remains the cornerstone of our engagement with the rest of the world. That is a fact. We are not going anywhere.

# Hagel details Defense Department’s ‘Plan B’ if sequestration continues

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — If sequestration continues into fiscal year 2014, the Defense Department will be forced to consider involuntary reductions-in-force for the civilian workforce, draconian cuts to military personnel accounts and a virtual halt to military modernization, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in a letter to Senate leaders, July 10.

The senators had requested detailed information on how continued sequestration could affect the military.

In the letter, Hagel detailed the “Plan B” the department must confront if Congress does not pass legislation that averts sequestration in fiscal 2014. If the process continues, DoD will be forced to cut \$52 billion more from the budget that year.

Hagel stressed in the letter that he fully supports President Barack Obama’s fiscal 2014 budget request and noted that if sequestration remains in effect, “the size, readiness and technological superiority of our

military will be reduced, placing at much greater risk the country’s ability to meet our current national security commitments.”

Congress gave DoD some flexibility to handle the cuts need for fiscal 2013, but more than 650,000 DoD civilians were still furloughed without pay for six days. Among those were more than 580 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians who work for the Nebraska National Guard.

However, the cuts in 2014 are too great even for flexibility within accounts to handle.

DoD hopes to avoid furloughs in 2014, the defense secretary said, but if sequestration remains in effect, “DoD will have to consider involuntary reductions-in-force to reduce civilian personnel costs.”

Readiness has already been diminished this year, Hagel said, and it will continue to decline if sequestration continues in 2014. Hiring freezes will also continue and facilities maintenance funds will further erode, he added.

If the sequestration mechanism

is applied to military personnel funding, “DoD could accommodate the required reductions only by putting into place an extremely severe package of military personnel actions including halting all accessions, ending all permanent-change-of-station moves, stopping discretionary bonuses and freezing all promotions,” Hagel wrote.

He called on Congress to work with the department to avoid sequestration in fiscal 2014 and to approve the president’s defense budget request.

The president’s budget request slows military pay raises and raises fees for some military retiree’s health care. It also looks to retire older Air Force and Navy assets and calls for a new base realignment and closure program.

“If the cuts continue, the department will have to make sharp cuts with far-reaching consequences, including limiting combat power, reducing readiness and undermining the national security interests of the United States,” Hagel said.

## Prairie Soldier

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One Big Happy Racing Family: Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade poses with her family by their race car trailer, sprint car and go-karts, Aug. 20, at the family's shop in Lincoln, Neb. (Pictured are, from left): Chantel, Mariah, Shayle, Michelle and Butch Bade. (Not pictured: Alexandria Bade).

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade is not your average soccer mom. Michelle, a mother of four daughters, has her hands full as a full-time dual-status military technician for the Nebraska Army National Guard while also shuttling her kids to various soccer games, cheerleading competitions and rodeos.

And those commitments don't even begin to account for the amount time Michelle and her husband, Butch, put in while making their weekly journeys pulling their 44-foot, white "Bade Racing" race car trailer to local race tracks where three of the Bade girls are rapidly making names for themselves on the Go-Kart and the 305 Sprint Car tracks.

According to Bade, who has served for more than 31 years in the Nebraska Army Guard including roughly 26 as a full-time member of the organization's Human Resources Department, it's a commitment she's happy to make.

"Just like any sport that your child is in, you like to be as involved as you can, support them and help them achieve their goals," said Michelle. "To miss any of their races is pretty hard for me to do. Watching the girls do something that they enjoy doing is so much fun and it's an event the whole family can take

part in."

**The Bade girls**  
Alexandria Bade, 25, is the oldest of the four daughters. She goes by Alex for short and works full-time as a nurse at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Neb. She also goes to school full-time where she is learning to become a registered nurse. When Alex isn't at work or hanging with her family, she enjoys rodeos.

Shayle Bade, 21, works full-time at MDR Racing and Customs in Lincoln, Neb., where she specializes in restoration and custom fabrication. She dreams of becoming a female driver on the NASCAR circuit some day. Although Shayle's racing helmet says, 'Daddy's Girl,' her car screams 'Mom' as it is wrapped with U.S. Army logos and graphics.

Mariah Bade, 16, is a senior at Lincoln East High School. Mariah's passion is cheerleading—especially competitive cheerleading. Mariah cheers for her high school and is on a competitive cheerleading squad, "Cheer Express," out of Lincoln, Neb. She may love her cart-wheels, flips and toe-touches, but she's not afraid to tear the dirt up racing her go-kart.

Chantel Bade, 13, is the youngest of the four daughters. Chantel also races go-karts, but also enjoys kicking the ball around on the soccer field and setting them up on the volleyball court.

**How it all started**



Look Mom, Two Wheels: Chantel Bade, 13, the youngest of Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade's daughters, catches a little air after getting hit from behind, seconds before flipping her go-kart, during a go-kart race at Eagle Raceway near Eagle, Neb., July 19. Thankfully, Chantel walked away with no injuries, even running to her family with excitement after she had her first flip, which was a way to learn to trust the racetrack.



Proud And Nervous Mom: Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade, Nebraska Army National Guard, watches a heat of racers while standing on her daughter Shayle's 305 sprint car before Shayle's turn at Eagle Raceway near Eagle, Neb., July 20.

So, how does a family filled with four daughters end up becoming so involved in racing? Actually, the story is pretty simple.

"(Butch) had four girls...he never had a boy," said Michelle. "His brother-in-law builds engines and his (nephew) raced go-karts."

One day, while watching the races, Butch suddenly had an idea: Why not give one of his daughters the opportunity to try out a go-kart, too? "He threw the tomboy in the go-Kart, which was Shayle," Michelle recalled recently.

Shayle admits she despised racing at first. "For two months I hated it," said Shayle. "Then I started to like it and pretty soon I loved racing."

While Shayle learned the ins and outs of the racing craft, her younger sisters watched – and learned – soaking in all of the information they could about the strategies involved in attempting to push a go-kart around a dirt track faster than the other races. That education continued as Shayle progressed from go-karts to mini-sprint race cars and finally the full-sized sprint cars.

Soon, they also wanted to put their feet to pedals.

And from there on it became a



Mom Is Always There: Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade makes sure her daughter, Shayle, 21, has everything she needs as Shayle's boyfriend, Chris Helget, prepares to install the steering wheel just before the final race of the 305 series sprint cars at Eagle Raceway, July 20.

family affair.

**Racing Season**  
Racing season usually runs from July to mid-September, but it's the one season of the year that brings the Bade family closer than any other.

"(Racing) brings our family together tons," said Chantel.

"It lets the family spend the weekends together and travel," added Alex.

Every Friday night, Mariah and Chantel race their go-karts at Eagle Speedway near Eagle, Neb. It gives the family an opportunity to catch up after the work week and slow down from all the hustle and bustle of summer camps and activities.

On Saturday nights it's Shayle's turn to hit the track in her 305 series sprint car. Prior to those races, family and friends come together in the Eagle Raceway pits to make sure Shayle's car is in tip-top shape, spending quality time together while they watch the other races taking place on the dirt track.

As the matriarch of the team, it's Michelle's main job at the track to video tape the daughters racing.

"She loves watching us out there racing," said Mariah, "unless we flip or wreck. She doesn't like that part of racing."

Michelle agreed that it can sometimes be a nerve-racking experience watching her daughters race around the track.

"People may not think that go-kart racing isn't very dangerous, but when Shayle wrecked her go-kart bad enough, they decided not to finish the race," said Michelle. "A few weeks ago Mariah came too close too taking a ride to the

hospital and Chantel flipped her kart this season."

"I couldn't wait for racing season to start but soon I will be able to breathe a sigh of relief when it is over," she added.

"It's hard watching them race especially after they've had near misses or have flipped their car enough that the frame broke in six spots," said Michelle. "Hearing or seeing about other crashes weighs a lot on my mind when the girls take the track. I'll walk around and whisper to one of the pit crew and ask if everything has been double and triple checked. It's a dangerous sport and, like they say, it's racing and anything can happen."

"You pray for their safety and the experience of drivers to make good decisions on the track and her pit crew's knowledge of the car - and crossing your fingers can't hurt either," she added.

**Army Theme**  
Shayle, Mariah and Chantel all sport the number 03 on their bright yellow and black cars. Those cars also carry the same U.S. Army logos that can be found on the race car trailer as well as the pit crew uniforms.

The girls are quick to note that they are not sponsored by the Army in any form. They simply do it to show their support for America's Soldiers.

They do it to support their mom.

At first Michelle said she had no idea the girls were going to go with an Army theme for their cars. She thought they were simply doing it to help her keep track of them as she videotaped their races.

**See RACING on 4.**



# Hagel says Defense Department to remain strong despite budget cuts

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel assured Marines in Hawaii, Aug. 22, that despite deep budget and force cuts, the U.S. military will remain the world's best, and the nation will honor the commitments it has made to them.

Hagel kicked off a four-nation trip to Southeast Asia with a troop talk at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

The secretary said the Marines are integral to the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, and he recognized the pivotal role they play in strengthening alliances and partnerships across the region.

"You are at the cutting edge of security, of stability and prosperity," he told the assembled group. "You are all a part of it, at the front end of it, the cutting edge of it. And what you do and how you do it is particularly important as to how the world sees America and how they view our interests, but probably more importantly, how they view our intentions."

When the secretary opened the floor to questions, every Marine questioner asked about the impact of budget reductions and seques-

tration on military readiness and credibility and retirement and educational benefits.

Hagel said he and other Defense Department leaders have been honest and direct with Congress and the American people about the national security implications of large budget cuts.

He expressed concern about the size of the budget and force reductions and uncertainty about future funding levels. These factors, and the speed with which cuts are taking place, give the DoD leaders "very little flexibility in the tough decisions that are going to have to be made," he said.

Even with these challenges, the secretary emphasized that the U.S. military remains the world's best.

"Even with these cuts — and they are severe, and they may be even more severe — there is no question that America has the most significant military capability in the world," he assured the Marines.

"There is no military even close to this military," he said, a point he said the United States has made its friends, allies and adversaries alike.

"We are not without resources.

We are not without capability," Hagel said. "You can measure that by any metric," most notably by the men and women in uniform.

"You are the best-trained, the smartest, the best-led, most professional military force this country has ever had," Hagel told the group.

He lauded the noncommissioned officer corps that he said stands head and shoulders above all others. "No other armed force in the world, no one is even close to having an enlisted NCO corps like we have in our institution," he said.

The secretary also noted the U.S. military's technological superiority and a budget, that even with deep reductions, remains sizeable.

"When you look at the balance sheet here, we are going to be the best, most capable, strongest military force in the world for a long time to come," he said.

Strategic choices being made today will help ensure that continues into the future, Hagel said. "I think this is going to make you stronger," he said, expressing confidence in America's people, its values and its military.

"We will come out of this stronger than we went in," he said.

## California National Guard deploys Predator to support firefighters battling Yosemite blaze

WASHINGTON (AFPS)—With wildfires continuing to rage around Yosemite National Park, the California National Guard deployed a remotely piloted aircraft that improves the incident commander's ability to monitor conditions on the ground.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel approved the use of an MQ-1 Predator to support firefighters battling the Rim Fire that, by Aug. 29, had expanded to more than 160,000 acres, Lt. Col. Thomas Keegan, California National Guard public affairs officer, reported.

The California Air National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing deployed the Predator on Aug. 28 and it is being flown in direct support of the incident commander under the command and

control of Army Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, California's adjutant general, Keegan said.

The aircraft, flying from the Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville for up to 22 hours without landing, will capture and deliver real-time 24/7 information on remote portions of the wildfire.

"The impact of this will be significant," Keegan said, Aug. 29. "It will identify where fire activity is located and how it is moving, as well as where it has been controlled."

The aircraft also will identify safe routes of retreat for firefighters on the scene and verify new fire created by lightning strikes or floating embers. This, Keegan explained, will help the incident commander stay on top of the changing situation on the ground and make the best use

of available resources.

Keegan emphasized that the images will be used only to support firefighting operations.

The aircraft's pilots, located at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside, Calif., will remain in constant contact with Federal Aviation Administration air traffic controllers from takeoff to landing and fly over unpopulated areas whenever possible, he said. The flight path generally will be limited to 30 nautical miles of the Rim Fire area, and whenever it flies outside the restricted airspace for the fire, a manned plane will escort it.

Meanwhile, nearly a dozen aircraft and crews from the California Air and Army National Guard were battling wildfires across Northern California.

## FURLOUGHES continued from page 1.

erable impact on the employees, their families and the Nebraska National Guard as a whole.

"The impact was significant when you consider that each technician experienced a 20 percent decrease in their pay for each week of the furlough," said Bohac. "In addition, it meant that each function that had technicians furloughed had one less day to address a variety of issues. For example, in our maintenance arenas, which are largely staffed with technicians, it meant one less day of maintenance work being accomplished, which in turn contributed to maintenance delays and backlogs that could have had an impact on our overall readiness."

"I was grateful that the Department of Defense was able to shorten the total number of planned furlough days," Bohac added.

According to an article by Jim Garamone of the American Forces Press Service, savings and the ability to reprogram funds made the Aug. 6 announcement possible, adding that the furloughs, for most employees, would be done by Aug. 17. In the Nebraska Guard, approximately 96 percent of the affected technicians had completed their furlough by Aug. 17. The furloughs ultimately resulted in a collective loss of pay of approximately \$631,000, said Chief Master Sgt. Susan Spence, a Nebraska National Guard Human Resources Office management analyst.

In a message announcing the reduction, Hagel said that since he had announced the original 11-day furlough in May, "Congress has approved most of a large reprogramming request that we submitted... giving us the flexibility to move funds across accounts. The military services have been aggressive in identifying ways to hold down costs, and we have been successful in shifting savings... to meet our highest priority needs."

At the time that Hagel announced the furloughs, DoD faced an \$11 billion shortfall, despite having imposed a hiring freeze, cutting facility maintenance and laying off temporary employees. According to Garamone, the cuts severely affected readiness

accounts, with Navy ships not sailing, Air Force squadrons not flying, and Army and Marine Corps units not training. The readiness issue became so problematic that it became the primary reason for the furloughs as it enabled DoD to find the last \$2 billion in savings it needed.

"The savings and reprogramming allowed the department to accomplish two goals," Garamone quoted an unnamed senior DoD leader as saying shortly after Hagel's memo was issued. First, there were 'modest improvements' in training. The Air Force was able to return squadrons to flying and the Army was able to fund organizational training. Second, DoD was able to reduce furlough days.

"While this is positive news for the department and for our valued civilian workers,... we're still facing some major challenges," the senior official said. "Military readiness is degraded heading into 2014. We still need several months and substantial funding to recover. And yet, 2014 is a year that will feature great uncertainty,... and it may feature some additional austerity."

In his memo, Hagel thanked the civilian workforce "for their patience and continued dedication to our mission during these extraordinarily tough times and for their continued service and devotion to our department and our country."

Bohac echoed those comments, saying he's concerned about the effects the now-past furloughs have had on the organization's employees.

"I am concerned about the morale of our technicians when we furlough them," he said. "They are integral to our efforts to train and prepare the force for response to our state and nation, and are no less important than the rest of the full-time staff in that regard."

"I am grateful for their spirit and commitment to service. I regret very much that they had to experience the challenges brought about by the furlough," added Bohac. "I am committed to finding ways to assist them if we ever find ourselves in this position again."

**(Editor's Note: Jim Garamone and the American Forces Press Service contributed significantly to this article.)**

## RACING continued from page 3.

"I didn't know they were going to (put the logos on the cars)," said Michelle. "They always had black or blue cars. And every time I tried to video tape a bunch of cars going around and around in a circle, Mom would videotape the wrong one and I would get mad."

"I said you should find another color," added Michelle. "So the next year they painted them yellow so I could see them, which is Butch and Shayle's favorite color: canary yellow."

Then the Bades wondered what they should do next to the cars.

"Well let's put U.S. Army stickers on it," said Michelle. "And it has stuck ever since. I think we have been doing that since Shayle was 10 or 11."

Michelle admits she feels a real sense of pride every time she sees the racecars.

"I love it," said Michelle. "Now look at it, it is all wrapped with the Army theme."

This last year, Shayle decided to take her recognition effort even further by adding actual Soldiers into the design of the car.

"Shayle called me and said she found a wrap for her car that had Soldiers on it," said Michelle. "I made sure there were some females on it, too."

Of course, having cars decked out in Army colors and logos carries some risk of misunderstanding. That's why Michelle always makes sure the girls know that they are



Photo by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Family Affair:** Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade and her daughter Shayle cheer on Mariah, Michelle's second youngest daughter, as she races in the flat go-kart adult stock division at Eagle Raceway near Eagle, Neb., July 19.

not sponsored by the Army.

The girls all agree it's all about doing what's right.

"It's for the troops and my mom," said Shayle. "If someone is at the races and doesn't have anyone to cheer on, they always follow the car covered in U.S. Army for the troops."

"It's all about supporting our troops," added Chantel. "I think it's pretty cool my Mom is in the military because usually everyone says it's their Dad... but no, it's my mom."

The girls have grown only knowing their mom in a U.S. Army uniform. "She has been in the military my whole life," said Alex. "I know nothing different."

That's why, considering all that Michelle has done for her daughters, state and country, the girls wanted to do something special for her.

"She's supported us for so long and all the troops have been fighting for us," said Mariah. "It's like our little way to give back."

### Role model

According to Michelle, despite the dangers, she knows there's something far more important going on beside simply winning or losing. Her daughters are gaining skills that they will be able to use the rest of their lives.

"Through racing they know that they can do anything they set their minds on, even if other people tell them that they can't or aren't suppose to because they are girls," said Michelle. "I know they have respect for the sport; they know how dangerous it can be, they know the safety equipment they use is a vital part of their uniform. If this



Courtesy Photo

**The Ladies Of The Family:** Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Bade of the Nebraska Army National Guard poses with her four daughters during the 2013 racing season at Eagle raceway near Eagle, Neb. (From left): Michelle, Mariah, Shayle, Chantel and Alexandria. Three of Michelle's four girls race either go-karts or a sprint car, which are all wrapped in Army logos and graphics.

is something they want to do, then they know besides racing they have to keep the equipment in shape, they have to clean the trailer, clean their cars, have respect for other drivers and their pit crew."

"They know they can't do this alone; it's a team effort," she added.

And even though Michelle thinks she is just like any other mother doing what's best for her daughters and family, her girls think she's doing much more than that.

"My mom has amazing strength as a woman, very supportive and is

full of courage," said Alex. "Noticing this when I was growing up has shown me what I would like when I am a mother."

"My mom has a different uniform she wears to work than some other moms," added Alex. "But she knows how to use and shoot a weapon better than most men."

According to all the girls, they are glad their mother isn't typical by any stretch.

Or, as Chantel said, chuckling: "Most average moms don't let their girls race."



# Officials hope to end year-long retention battle on high note

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger

Staff Photojournalist

As the 2013 fiscal year slowly comes to a close, Nebraska Army National Guard officials are pushing to meet their end-of-year retention goals. Lt. Col. Shane Martin, Nebraska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command commander, said Nebraska's mission for 2013 includes gaining 407 enlisted Soldiers, 20 officers and six warrant officers, while retaining 575 current Soldiers.

From the first part of this series, Martin said his focus was pretty simple: "My emphasis is retaining the (state's) highly trained and quality Soldiers to answer the call of our state and nation."

After months of actively working to meet their goals, Martin admits there were a lot more issues to look at than just the number of Soldiers needed to be retained.

Since the beginning of the year Martin said some of the techniques have changed.

"We initially didn't understand the complete depth of all those with (estimated termination of service) flags and bars due to height, weight, (Army Physical Fitness Test) and other issues," said Martin. "And we are readdressing those issues even more."

According to Martin, Guard officials knew a number of Soldiers had been flagged and been barred from reenlistment due to having trouble meeting the military physical fitness standards. What they didn't understand at the time, he said, was how those administrative actions would affect their ability to reenlist Soldiers interested in staying in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

He said that over the past year, National Guard Bureau has provided some flexibility in addressing this problem.

"National Guard Bureau has worked very hard to accrue some programs to help," said Martin. "There are now bonuses available for those (Soldiers) under 90 days (from reenlistment), which was not

*"The cost of training a new Soldier is \$200,000-plus, compared to spending X amount of money on a bonus or not getting a bonus and retaining that Soldier because they want to continue in the service...It saves the (Department of Defense) a lot of money."*

— Maj. Kenneth Boatman  
Recruiting and Retention Command

## Retaining Nebraska's Fighting Force

Fourth of a Multi-part Series

available previously." Still, he emphasized, even those 90-day bonuses are by exception only.

"We are working closely with the units on those 90-day extensions and several units have excelled at finding good candidates that just need a little more time to get into shape," said Martin.

As of Aug. 15, the Nebraska Army National Guard retention battle is at 442 reenlistments, with an additional 91 extensions for six months or less.

"We have made a significant stride on it," said Martin, "but not quite attained it yet."

According to Nebraska retention officials, they are continuing to work to ensure that Soldiers understand everything they need to know about the 90-day window availability and continue to push the 90-day extensions for those who could really use it.

Martin said recruiting and retention officials have also increased emphasis on their recruiting efforts.

"Due to the known shortfall, we are trying to overdrive our recruiting mission," said Martin. "We are going to overdrive our recruiting mission to augment our losses."

Martin said that the Nebraska

Army National Guard's recruiting mission is right on track for the current fiscal year. Still, he said, considering that training a new Soldier costs significantly more than retaining a current Soldier, the organization's health really does require that retention efforts continue to remain a focal point for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"The cost of training a new Soldier is \$200,000-plus, compared to spending X amount of money on a bonus or not getting a bonus and retaining that Soldier because they want to continue in the service," said Maj. Kenneth Boatman, executive officer for Recruiting and Retention Command. "It saves the (Department of Defense) a lot of money."

According to Martin, retaining Nebraska's fighting force could change the whole mission.

"Without retaining the fighting force, we would go below end-strength, which essentially loses us opportunities at future force structure, which could essentially lose us current force structure," said Martin. "And with force structure comes training seats and training opportunities, specifically annual trainings and schools."

"It comes down to equipment, training areas and training seats... without strength, we can't do any of that," added Martin. "Strength is essential to what we do. And on top of that we cannot complete domestic operations."

# Guard helps bring NFL program to Nebraska

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger

Staff Photojournalist

For the first time, Lincoln-area schools were able to participate in the NFL High School Player Development Program at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, Neb., July 15-17, presented by the National Guard.

Approximately 220 high school football players from freshmen to seniors participated in the camp that the Nebraska Army National Guard recruiters helped host for Lincoln North Star, Crete School, Malcolm and Waverly High School.

The NFL High School Player Development Program addresses challenges facing high school football programs across the country primarily on underserved communities. HSPD serves as a free resource for both high school players and coaches.

According to the NFL HSPD website, the program emphasizes safety, concussion awareness, character development, life skills and football fundamentals.

"We are here to promote team work, leadership and athletics," said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Strack, a recruiter for the Nebraska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command. "A lot of the players can't afford to go to a football camp, so when the Guard comes in and sponsors it, it's free for the players."

"It gives them the opportunity to participate in a camp with a big school that they normally wouldn't get that chance," added Strack.

"It's incredible; camps anymore are getting more and more expensive and it's hard for families to afford it," said Scott Amen, Malcolm High School football head coach. "To have this so our kids can come and not worry about the expenses, they just get here and play."

The camp includes five sessions over three days. During the



Photo by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Let's Play Football:** A Waverly High School football player tries to intercept a pass by a Malcolm High School football player during the National Guard-NFL football camp at Lincoln North Star High School, Lincoln, Neb., on July 17.

first session they cover concussion awareness, NCAA guidelines, time management and other life skill topics. The following sessions involve learning football fundamentals including offensive, defense and opportunity to scrimmage against the other schools.

"The kids are loving it," said Strack. "They get to go out and play football in July."

The high school football coaches ran the camp after receiving instruction information from HSPD.

"This camp helps them get into rhythm," said Amen. "We can really slow down things and teach and talk about things at this point in time. And when practice starts up the pace should pick up a little bit."

According to the football players themselves, they love the opportunity to play football and learn about what the National Guard has to offer.

"I think it's really good," said Brook Bolles, a senior at Lincoln North Star. "The guys are getting a lot of knowledge here and I think it helps out a lot because you actually get to hit people, play offense and defense."

# Grand Island Soldiers use annual weapons training to strengthen ties with battalion's family readiness group

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Staff Writer

The Grand Island-based 1-376th Aviation conducted individual weapons qualification training at the Nebraska National Guard's Greenleaf Training Site, Aug. 3-4. But the real story was with the family support groups and food providers who shared their time, effort and money to make sure Soldiers were given an opportunity to eat a real meal.

"This is kind of an extension of your family," said Julie Mitchell, a Family Readiness Group member and Army spouse. "You're reaching out to them and doing what you would do for your normal family."

Julie's husband, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeffrey Mitchell—a 1-376th Aviation pilot — has been serving with the Armed Forces for nearly 20 years. She said she feels this is a great opportunity to help out with meeting others' family members and friends.

"It's something that you want to do," she said. "It's nice to hear people talking about their husband or whoever—it's nice to just support them."

And supporting troops and families is what it's all about, said Jeff.

"When we have them out at these



Photos by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

**Steady Shot:** A member of the Grand Island-based 1-376th Aviation Battalion, fires a round from his 9 mm pistol, Aug. 3, at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., during the unit's individual weapons qualification.

events, we can show them all of the work that goes into the planning and safety processes that we put together to support the ground Soldiers," said Jeff. "Without the support of our families, this would be an incredible burden for some."

With long days and hard work comes a desire to eat a good meal. Nonetheless, these Soldiers and family members were there to work; and work hard they did, said 1st Sgt. Ron Schroeder.

"The guys are working really hard out here," said Schroeder. "So, first and foremost, that means we don't have to eat MREs."

"Any time you can get real food, it helps with morale," he said. "Good barbeque sure has helped that a lot and we appreciate their help so much—it means the world to us."

Schroeder was referring to the all-donated, "Pig in a Bag" barbeque pulled-pork sandwiches catered by Ron and Cecilia Neseth, the "Pig in a Bag" owners.

"My brother keeps busy with this catering service, and he's out on another job, so he invited us to come and do this one," said Renee Messersmith. "It's important for us to support the troops, because my son, Sgt. Sean Burton, is also in the (Nebraska National) Guard; so we do whatever we can."

Messersmith said she and her brother have been supporting the Nebraska National Guard for more than three years with the business' food and services. She added that even though Ron has a full-time job and does this on the side, supporting the Guard is a favorite event.



**Ready To Chow Down:** A member of the Grand Island-based 1-376th Aviation Battalion, talks with a family program volunteer while other members of the unit prepare to eat some specially-prepared barbecue that was cooked for them courtesy of "Pig in a Bag" owners Ron and Cecilia Neseth. The couple donated the food and their time in recognition of the work that the Guardsmen do for their state and nation.

"We've gone to Camp Ashland and done some things there, too," said Steve Messersmith, Renee's husband and fellow "Pig in a Bag" caterer. "This is our biggest donation."

It's these donations, and donations like it, that make training at the Greenleaf Training Site a little easier on the troops.

"It makes it a lot more comfortable out here," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Robinson. "It's just nice to have a better meal and not an MRE."

Robinson, a fulltime Nebraska Army Guardsman, recognizes the

benefits of volunteer and family support groups.

"It's nice to meet the other halves of your fellow Soldiers," he said. "That way when you telling stories at home, they have an idea of who you're talking about."

"It's important for the FRG to be involved with all of the Soldiers," said Hayle Rohlck, an FRG member. "When I leave our coffees after drill, or after doing these kinds of setups—as soon as those things are done—I think: what an amazing thing these National Guard Soldiers are doing."



CHANGE OF COMMAND continued from page 1.

from each of the major subordinate command composed of units from around the state. More than 400 service members, friends and family members witnessed the ceremony.

“I am very proud and pleased that the Nebraska National Guard is one of the strongest and most capable, most highly-trained and highly-professional military forces anywhere in our country,” Heineman said moments later as he addressed the gathered crowd and formations of Soldiers and Airmen.

“This organization is well prepared to face the missions of the modern era thanks to the men and women serving in the Nebraska National Guard. I take my responsibility of finding a successor to General Lyons very seriously and I am pleased that Major General Bohac will be Nebraska’s next adjutant general,” Heineman said.

Heineman, who appointed Lyons as adjutant general in 2009 when Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy was selected to become the deputy director of the U.S. Army National Guard, had special praise for the departing adjutant general who once again will be replacing Kadavy in an extremely important post.

“General Lyons has been an outstanding leader for the Nebraska National Guard,” Heineman said. “It’s clear that his talents have been recognized at the federal level.”

“We wish him the best as he prepares for this new responsibility. This is the second time in a row that one of our adjutant generals has assumed this very prestigious honor. No other state has done that,” he added.

In addressing the Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen one last time, Lyons first took time to remember the 14 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers who have died while mobilized for active duty since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. He then thanked the assembled formations for their hard work and commitment to an important mission, adding that some of his proudest moments as adjutant general came when he had the firsthand opportunity to watch as Nebraska Soldiers, Airmen, emergency management professionals and other state employees came together to support operations in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and at home in Nebraska when emergencies affected the citizens of Nebraska.

“I feel lucky and blessed to have had the privilege to work with such a great group of Nebraskans and I will miss them all,” said Lyons. He then thanked Heineman for giving him the opportunity to be adjutant general, the families and employers of the Guardsmen and women, and his wife and sons for their love and support. He also extended his best wishes to the Bohac family.

“Although I’ll be heading off to D.C. tomorrow,” Lyons said, “I will always be a



Photo by Senior Airman Mary Thach

**Pass In Review:** Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac participate in a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14. Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who was leaving to become the deputy director of the Army National Guard, relinquished command to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who became Nebraska’s 33rd adjutant general.

Nebraska National Guardsman.”

The day mostly belonged to Nebraska’s newest adjutant general and his family as Bohac was first promoted to the rank of major general in a small ceremony at the Nebraska Air National Guard’s 155th Civil Engineer Squadron classroom, with Heineman and Bohac’s wife, Kristie, pinning his new two-star rank on his uniform. Among those attending the ceremony were Lyons and his wife, Lt. Col. Amy Lyons, members of Bohac’s family and close friends, Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale, the adjutants general of Kentucky and Wyoming, and a number of senior Nebraska National Guard staff members.

Bohac later thanked the governor for offering him the chance to lead the Nebraska Military Department into the future.

“Thank you for the trust and confidence you placed in me,” Bohac said to the governor shortly after accepting the Nebraska National Guard’s organizational colors. “I’m humbled to be selected to serve as the 33rd adjutant general of Nebraska.”

Bohac went on to outline his three main priorities as the adjutant general of Nebraska. First, Bohac said he wants to focus on the total force of the Nebraska Military Department. “We will continue to seek the opportunities to sustain our capabilities and build upon our hard won experience,” he said. “Our mission is simple—to prepare and deliver combat forces to our nation at home and abroad and protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of this state when needed.”

Next, he thanked the families of the Nebraska Guardmembers for making it possible

Governor thanks Lyons for service as adjutant general

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

In welcoming Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac as the 33rd Nebraska adjutant general, Gov. Dave Heineman also had some special words for Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who was departing the position to become the deputy director of the U.S. Army National Guard.

“This is a big family and an important family,” said Heineman as he presented Lyons and his wife, Lt. Col. Amy Lyons, with a plaque in recognition of his service. “We take care of the men and women who serve in the Guard.”

“General Lyons has done a great job at that,” said Heineman, adding that the proof of Lyons’ work rest in his selection to follow his predecessor – Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy – into the deputy director post. “Think about that... a small state like ours and the talent we are producing at this level.”

Later, Lyons said he was leaving his Nebraska post with mixed feelings, adding that one of the highlights of his tenure was the readiness and commitment of Nebraska’s Airmen and Soldiers to respond to unprecedented state emergencies, including the historic Missouri and Platte River flooding in 2011 and the large outbreak



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**Thanks For Your Service:** Gov. Dave Heineman presents Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons and his wife, Lt. Col. Amy Lyons, a plaque commemorating Lyons’ service as adjutant general.

of wildfires in 2012.

“Our Soldiers and Airmen, literally within hours of notice, dropped what they were doing and were responding to the needs of our fellow citizens,” said Lyons. “And if you ask them – if you talked to any Soldier or Airman out there – what they were gaining was a lot of satisfaction from those types of missions. They love the federal mission. They love deploying for operations overseas, but there’s a sense of satisfaction helping your friends and neighbors.”

“So that’s been a highlight of my tenure.”

for their service members to serve the state and nation.

“I’m committed to ensuring you are provided with timely and relevant information so that you’re prepared to support your Airmen, Soldiers and employees of the agency so that in turn, we can support you,” he said.

Bohac said his final priority is to focus on the many different types of communities that the Nebraska Guard serves. “We will deliver engaged leadership to our communities, the cities and towns, the employers, the schools and others (communities) so that you know who we are, what we do and why we do it.”

As adjutant general, Bohac will command the Nebraska National Guard, an all-volunteer, operational force comprised of more than 4,600 Airmen and Soldiers. These citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have kept watch over Nebraska during times of need since its inception in 1854. Domestically, the Nebraska National Guard has supported first responders during civil-support operations such the winter blizzard of 2009, the historic flooding on the Platte and Missouri Rivers

in 2011 and last year’s wildfires in western and central Nebraska.

Bohac also thanked Lyons for the guidance and friendship he extended to him and his family during his time working as his deputy adjutant general.

“You’ve handed over an amazing organization. I’m pleased to follow in your footsteps and remain personally grateful for your confidence in me as I assume command of the Nebraska National Guard,” he said. “God bless you in your next assignment.”

Bohac then closed with the philosophy he brings with him into his new assignment.

“My coin, as the assistant adjutant general for Air, has this saying on it,” Bohac said—“‘Excellence is never an accident.’ That’s what we do in the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. We don’t use luck or hope as a planning factor; we seek excellence. We have a demonstrated track record of achieving just that and I am highly confident that we will continue to do so. I’m excited, humbled and proud to be your next adjutant general.”

BOHAC continued from page 1.

Air National Guard on Aug. 11, 1988, as a distinguished honor graduate of the Air National Guard’s Academy of Military Science at McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn. Bohac then served for 10 years as the traditional, part-time supply officer for the 155th Resource Management Squadron in Lincoln, Neb.

In 1988, Bohac transferred to the 155th Aircraft Generation Squadron to serve as an aircraft maintenance officer, serving there until September 1998 when he assumed command of the 155th Maintenance Squadron. He later served as the commander of the 155th Aircraft Generation Squadron until November 2003 when he transferred to the Nebraska National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters to serve as the full-time executive staff support officer.

Bohac later served as the deputy chief of staff for joint operations before being appointed as the Nebraska Air National Guard director of staff in July 2007, a position he served in until becoming the assistant adjutant general in April 2010.

Bohac deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom twice. He served as the senior reserve component advisor for U.S. Air Force Central Command in Southwest Asia from December 2008 until May 2009, where he supported operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

He also deployed to Turkey in support of an Air Expeditionary Force mission earlier in the conflict.

Bohac is also a veteran of Op-

Bohac: I want to ensure that we’re postured in ways to support governor, president

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

Shortly after accepting Gov. Dave Heineman’s offer to become Nebraska’s 33rd adjutant general, then-Brig. Gen. Daryl Bohac spoke about what he perceives as his primary job and how he intends to utilize the first few months of his tenure to set in place the building blocks to get there.

“In the military, a leader has a responsibility to ensure that we are organized, that we are trained and equipped to serve purposes for either the combatant commander overseas or for the governor in response to natural disasters, such as the Nebraska National Guard did over the past couple years during the floods and the wild fires last year,” Bohac said during the July 8 news conference announcing his selection to serve as the 33rd adjutant general.

That’s why Bohac said he plans



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**New Adjutant General:** Brig Gen. Daryl Bohac addresses the media while surrounded by Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, July 8, moments after Bohac was announced as Heineman’s selection to become the 33rd Nebraska adjutant general.

to use his first 90 days to conduct a strategic review to ensure that the Nebraska National Guard is headed in the right directions to meet both its federal and state

missions.

“(I want) to make sure that we’re postured in ways to support the governor and the president when asked to do so,” he said.

erations Noble Eagle, Decisive Endeavor and Deliberate Guard.

As the assistant adjutant general for the Nebraska National Guard, he served as the principal advisor to Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, the 32nd adjutant general, on complex

and sensitive issues in the areas of logistics, command and control, communications, manpower and personnel, strength management and other areas related to mission operations. He also assisted Lyons in ensuring that Nebraska National

Guard units were provided with adequate guidance, manpower, resources and facilities to support both federal and state missions.

Along with serving as the adjutant general and director of NEMA, Bohac will also serve as a member

of Heineman’s cabinet.

Bohac said he was both humbled and excited by the selection and the opportunity to serve as the adjutant general. “I consider myself truly blessed by this opportunity and take very seriously the responsibility that the position brings with it,” said Bohac during the news conference.

He said he also knows he is stepping into an enormous challenge of leading the organization, which has spent the past decade deploying thousands of times in support of combat, peacekeeping and other missions around the globe, while also responding to historic emergency missions closer to home, both in Nebraska and other states.

“As we look out, particularly on the Army National Guard side, our deployment experience is going to drop off,” said Bohac in describing what he sees are the biggest near-term challenges. “That means that we have to find ways to keep the men and women who have enlisted to serve their state and nation engaged in ways that are meaningful and have purpose for them so that they stay around.”

“One thing that the Nebraska National Guard prides itself in is high retention rates over time,” said Bohac, adding it’s not uncommon to see Nebraska Guardsmen spend decades as members of the organization. “I would expect that we may suffer some retention issues if we don’t find ways to keep them engaged and feeling like they’re doing meaningful work.”





Photo by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

**Full View:** Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard participate in a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14. Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who was leaving to become the deputy director of the Army National Guard, relinquished command to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who became Nebraska's 33rd adjutant general.

# Through the Viewfinder:

## Adjutant general change of command ceremony



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Old Glory:** Soldiers hang the American flag from the fourth-floor banister of the Joint Force Headquarters building at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**Colors On Display:** Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard display the state's colors during a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14.



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**Making It Official:** Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac sign the oath of office after Heinemen swore in Bohac to the rank of major general at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14. Heineman then presided over a change of command ceremony where Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons passed command of the Nebraska National Guard to Bohac.



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**Paperwork:** Oath of office paperwork is pictured after Heinemen swore in Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac to the rank of major general at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**Present And Past:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons participate in a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14. Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who was leaving to become the deputy director of the Army National Guard, relinquished command to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who became Nebraska's 33rd adjutant general.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Paying Respect:** Col. Rick Dahlman and the members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 92nd Troop Command present arms while passing in review during the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General Change of Command Ceremony on Sunday, July 14, at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.

**(Left): Color Guard:** Members of the Nebraska National Guard Color Guard pass in review during a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., July 14.



■ Nebraska officials open two readiness centers

# Nebraska National Guard expands footprint

■ **New Mead Training Site readiness center increases state’s training capabilities**

By **Sgt. Heidi Krueger**

Staff Photojournalist

The brand new Nebraska National Guard Mead-Atlas Readiness Center building was dedicated July 16 by Gov. Dave Heineman, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and other state and local leaders at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb.

“This is a really exciting day for the National Guard and the state of Nebraska to officially open the new Mead-Atlas readiness center,” said Heineman.

“I know from my own experience, training, preparation, and continually maintaining your ability to do your duties are very important,” added Heineman. “For the Guard’s 402nd Military Police Battalion, this is going to be a great facility on a nearly 1,200 acre site.”

The new \$10.8 million building will house the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 402nd Military Police Battalion. The building includes 47,902 square feet for training, administration and support.

The new facility will provide work and training for approximately 150 full- and part-time Soldiers.

“This facility gives us the opportunity to be closer to the training sites,” said Maj.



Photos by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**New Digs:** The Mead-Atlas Readiness Center sits on the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., July 16. The state-of-the-art \$10.8 million facility includes nearly 48,000 square feet and will be the new home of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 402nd Military Police Battalion.

Daniel Benes, executive officer for the 402nd MP Bn. “It’s centrally located between Lincoln and Omaha, not only for our unit, but for our state and the Nebraska National Guard to respond to anything.”

Bohac couldn’t agree more.

“The Soldiers of the 402nd can walk out the door and be immediately on the training site and not worry about driving to and from,” said Bohac. “We will be more efficient and more effective and that’s a good thing for our men and women.”

Bohac also thanked the community of Mead for all its support of the National Guard over the years.

“I would like to thank the city of Mead for all your community leadership for being here with us today,” said Bohac. “I am hopeful this is the beginning of a long-term relationship that this community as we continue to grow structures out here at Mead Training Site.”



**Now Open:** Gov. Dave Heineman joins Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska’s adjutant general, and other military and local leaders to cut the ribbon of the new Mead-Atlas Readiness Center at the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., July 16. The building has many interesting architectural elements.



## One-time U.S. Reserve building gets modern facelift

By **2nd Lt. Alex Salmon**

Assistant Editor

The Nebraska National Guard’s footprint expanded recently when Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, joined with other state and local leaders in cutting the ribbon to the newly-renovated Nebraska National Guard East Campus Readiness Center building during a ceremony, July 19, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s East Campus in Lincoln, Neb.

During the ceremony, Heineman thanked those in attendance and especially those responsible for getting the project to completion. He said having state-of-the-art facilities for Nebraska Guardsmen to train in is vitally important.

“If you look over the last decade, we’ve had the National Guard deployed all over the world – Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and then here within the state,” said Heineman.

Tornados, blizzards, wildfires and flooding have also required help from the Nebraska National Guard, said Heineman.

“If you’re going to be prepared for those conditions...you’ve got to constantly and continuously train,” said Heineman. “So, we appreciate what this readiness center is going to mean in the terms of the ability to make sure the National Guard is prepared.”

“This is really an exciting day for our state, for the city of Lincoln, for the National Guard to designate this readiness center for the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade,” said Heineman. “This is all about training, preparation, readiness – and you have to have the best equipment, the best centers...to do that.”

The newly-renovated \$3.1 million building includes 23,874 square feet of space for training, administration and support and will also temporarily house the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade. The Nebraska National Guard’s 72nd



**Major Facelift:** The newly-renovated Nebraska National Guard’s East Campus Readiness Center sits in Lincoln, Neb. The building was originally a 1950s-era U.S. Army Reserve building and recently renovated for use by the Guard’s 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 72nd Civil Support Team.



Photos by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**Double Duty:** Gov. Dave Heineman joined Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, and other military, state and local leaders to cut the ribbon on the newly renovated East Campus Readiness Center in Lincoln, Neb., July 19. The nearly 24,000-square foot building will house the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and serve as a center for training Nebraska Army National Guardsmen.

Civil Support Team will also use part of the facility. Approximately 175 full- and part-time Soldiers will work and train in the facility.

According to Lt. Col. Curtis

Abendroth, a construction and facilities management officer, the building was initially constructed in the 1950s and belonged to the U.S. Army Reserve. The Nebraska Na-

tional Guard acquired the building from the Army Corps of Engineers and began the revitalization of the facility in October 2011.

Abendroth had a special connection with the building, as he began his career in the building almost 28 years ago.

“To be able to see the building transform from what it was, to what it is today has truly been tremendous,” said Abendroth.

Abendroth added that the building will add needed administrative office space and equipment bays to the Nebraska National Guard’s inventory.

“To be able to pick up a facility like this and be able to use it and bring life into it,...(this) gives that square footage back to us so we can have Soldiers within the state able

to come and train in such world-class facilities like we have here,” said Abendroth.

The facility, Heineman said, gives

him even more confidence than he already had in the Nebraska National Guard.

“I’m very, very proud of the Guard and what we do in the United States military today compared to 30 years ago,” said Heineman. “We have never had a more integrated, more coordinated

force today than what we have with what the Guard, the Reserve and the active duty components do. They’re all expected to perform at a very high level. You do it every single day and we are very, very proud of it.”

“It starts with that training, that preparation and that’s what these readiness centers are all about.”

### East Campus RC

*by the numbers*

<b>Size:</b>	23,874 square feet
<b>Cost:</b>	\$3.1 million
<b>Units:</b>	67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade 72nd Civil Support Team
<b>Soldiers:</b>	175



# Celebrating 67 years

## Former commander helps Nebraska Air Guard celebrate birthday

By Senior Airman Mary Thach  
Staff Writer

Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing welcomed retired Maj. Gen. Robert Bailey to join in celebrating the Nebraska National Guard's 67th birthday, July 26, at the Nebraska National Guard air base, in Lincoln, Neb.

Bailey, a former 155th ARW commander whose father also served as commander of the Lincoln-based organization, spoke to unit members about the Nebraska Air National Guard's history and the evolution of the 155th ARW.

The Nebraska National Guard is the second oldest Air Guard unit in the U.S., established July 26, 1946. Two years after the organization was established, the unit employed 48 aircraft, six different models and 44 aircraft technicians. Bailey explained how the Nebraska Air National Guard began and how the unit evolved to a force today with approximately 900 members.

Bailey praised the skills of the Guardsmen in the Nebraska Air National Guard during the 40 years of his involvement with the unit. He said the combination of skills related to aircraft maintenance and the unit's mission capabilities allowed the wing to walk away with many awards over the years.

Bailey said things really started to change when the Air Force began to monitor the Air National Guard more closely around 40 years ago.

"In the 1970s, the Air Force decided to start inspecting the Air National Guard. They inspected us using active duty inspectors," said Bailey. "While initially we pushed back on it, it was really the best thing that ever happened. It set the standards a little higher, we worked a little harder and when they raised the bar, we just got a little better.



Bailey



Photo by Senior Airman Mary Thach

**Sweet Day:** Master Sgt. Shannon Nielsen, the 155th Air Refueling Wing's public affairs superintendent, cuts the birthday cake following a ceremony commemorating the Air National Guard's 67th birthday at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb. July 26.

The inspection results are clearly a result of the skill sets demonstrated by the Airmen in this unit."

The 1970s also saw the military become more open to women, which increased mission capability and the strength of the unit.

"They brought fresh perspective on things, the way you think about things, the way you treat people, the skills," Bailey said. "They increased our equipment base by 50 percent, so you are going to have better success of keeping your strength up."

"After the Vietnam War, it wasn't popular being in the military. It wasn't popular being in the Guard," Bailey added. "Strength was a big issue. So, we got our strength up and kept it up. This gave us great credibility not only in the services, but with the politicians, which allowed us to be better at our jobs. For the

National Guard to be able to do its mission, we have to be able to keep our strength up."

Bailey said the effects of the "Abrams Doctrine" – named after Gen. Creighton Abrams, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army in 1972 – also can't be over-estimated. He said Abrams saw the effects on the country of using a draft to fight the Vietnam War, instead of calling upon the National Guard and U.S. Reserve.

"Abrams said, 'America should never go to war without bringing along the National Guard,' because it brings along the American public," said Bailey.

Volunteerism of the National Guard is what allowed the Air National Guard to go and perform operational missions, work the same day-to-day jobs as members of the active duty U.S. Air Force, and provide mission

support during conflicts and contingencies, said Bailey. The active duty Air Force gained confidence in Air National Guard based on those demonstrated leadership skills.

The Air Force ultimately allowed the Air Guard to become involved in world-wide conflicts and warfighting, thanks to that leadership and volunteerism, said Bailey. The Guard's community tie also spilled over into the active-duty Army, causing it to increasingly see the Army Guard as an asset.

"When a conflict came up, the Air Guard got right in there and got to work," said Bailey. "(Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm also) caused the Army to rethink their relationship with the Army National Guard. Certainly, they know now that the Army National Guard is a great fighting force, given resources, training and proper equipment. They could not do it without the Army Guard. All of this is part of the evolutionary process of where we are today."

Bailey said he feels there will continue to be a fight between the active duty force and the reserve components for equality regarding aircraft, budgeting, training, missions and role submissions. He said that the Guard is not going to be treated as equals to the active duty forces, but it does need to be involved in all of the missions, be budgeted properly and have current, up-to-date training and equipment.

"The best thing about the National Guard is politics. The worst part of the National Guard is politics," said Bailey. "Certainly, the National Guard has forced the hand of the Air Force to make some decisions they did not want to make. But by and large, that was done for good reasons. These reasons helped the defense of this nation, which is the bottom line."

Bailey closed his history review using the well-known motto that 'Guard is family,' and how the organization's sense of community contributes to its ability to accomplish its mission. The Guard is connected by where its people live and work, and the Guard's mission keeps the organization involved in the community and the state mission.

"The Army and Air National Guard are the linkage between people in uniform and the public."

# Nebraska adjutant general talks leadership with Rotary campers

By 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

As the leader of approximately 4,600 Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's newly-appointed adjutant general, knows a thing or two about leadership. Bohac tried to impart some of that leadership knowledge during a discussion with 88 future leaders at the Rotary District 5630's Rotary Youth Leadership Awards camp at Halsey National Forest near Halsey, Neb., July 23.

Rotary district 5630 represents two-thirds of Nebraska, primarily in the western area of the state. Thirty-six Rotary clubs selected participants from their community who will be entering their junior or senior year of high school to receive a scholarship to the camp.

The goal of the program is for the students to spend a week exploring their leadership qualities while also introducing them to the power of community and world service projects. During the camp the students conducted exercises, physical and mental challenges, and heard from different leaders throughout the state.

Bohac said the students had already taken a positive step in developing their leadership skills by attending the camp.

"Some of you maybe don't feel like a leader or you're not sure what that is and that's part of the ongoing exploration of your own development," said Bohac to the assembled students. "I will tell you that leaders aren't necessarily born. There are some people that seem to be naturals at it, but



Photo by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**Future Leaders:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's adjutant general, speaks with 88 high school students during the District 5630 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards at Halsey National Forest near Halsey, Neb., July 23. Bohac discussed leadership with the Western Nebraska students, who were spending the week exploring their leadership qualities and being introduced to the power of community and world service projects.

there are others of us that work at it constantly...I'm still working on it."

Bohac outlined three important keys to being a good leader.

His first key to good leadership was to ensure one has the proper knowledge.

"Know your stuff," said Bohac. "Be confident. Know what you're about, know what your organization is about and know who you're trying to lead."

Bohac added that knowing one's stuff doesn't mean being a "know-it-all" and trying to show off with superior knowledge.

"In my role as the leader of the (Nebraska) National Guard...the

smartest thing I do is not open my mouth and listen to others," said Bohac.

Secondly, Bohac advised the future leaders to 'know yourself.' He used an analogy of when basketball great Michael Jordan attempted to play professional baseball, but achieved only mediocre results. Bohac added that if one spends all of their time working on weaknesses, it will only lead to frustration.

"Here's what's important about this point about knowing yourself," he said. "Know what you're good at, know what you love to do, know what you have a passion for."

Bohac's final point was to 'know

your team.' Knowing one's team allows the team to have what they need to get the job done. Knowing one's team also allows team member to be recognized for the great work they perform.

Koby Rickertsen, chair of the Rotary youth leadership awards program, was instrumental in getting leaders from the Nebraska National Guard to speak with the students. He said his 13 years in the U.S. Navy showed him the true value of leadership.

"When I think leadership, I think about the military," said Rickertsen.

"The whole week is based on trying to have the kids discover themselves," he added. "Trying to figure out where they fit in as far as what their strengths and weaknesses are. I think the general did a really good job of hammering that home. You need to spend a lot of your time working on strengths and not necessarily focusing on weaknesses."

Along with Bohac, additional members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard were on hand to help educate the students about leadership and financial opportunities available through service in the Guard.

Following Bohac's comments, the students took part in a question and answer session for all of the Guard personnel. Many of the students took away great cues for leadership and gained more insight into how military service plays a role in developing leadership.

"From the speech there were a lot of good leadership skills, which is what we're looking for since we all want to be good leaders," said Erin Husmann, who is entering her junior year at Kearney Catholic High School in Kearney, Neb.

During the question and answer portion of the event, Husmann asked every Guard member in attendance a question all of the campers had been asked earlier – what is your greatest accomplishment?

"It was really interesting to see it from another point of view from somebody who had been working for the services and had already done so much," said Husmann. "All of us are like, 'Oh, we won state basketball' or something. Then you guys are like, 'my kids and my military service...' It was really beneficial and exciting to hear that."

Caitlin Thomas, who will be entering her junior year at Creek Valley High School in Chappell, Neb., enjoyed hearing from members of both the Army and Air National Guard because it gave her a different perspective and view of each branch's leadership qualities.

"They talked about great qualities and it makes me want to be a better leader in my school," she said. "In my school I'm kind of a follower, so it makes me want to be a leader...a good leader, not just a do-what-I-say leader."

Bohac stressed the importance of always taking the steps necessary to be prepared for the next step of leadership in whatever one is pursuing.

"If I waited until someone thought I was ready to be promoted to do that work, I would always be waiting," said Bohac. "But if I took care of it at the earliest opportunity and did the absolute best I could, then I was ready when the organization was ready."



**Wait In Line:** AKC-135R Stratotanker from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing refuels an F-22 while another waits during a mission over New Mexico, July 13.



Photos by Staff Sgt. James Lieth



**Aerial Ballet:** A KC-135R Stratotanker from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing refuels an F-22 during a mission over New Mexico, July 13. A total of three refuelers from the 155th ARW assisted in a training exercise that involved providing fuel to six F-22 Raptors and four F-16 Fighting Falcons.



**A Room With a View:** Tech. Sgt. Brad Musick, a boom operator with the 155th Operations Group, lines up an aircraft for aerial refueling during a mission over New Mexico, July 13. Musick and his crew helped refuel six F-22 Raptors and four F-16 Fighting Falcons during the daylong mission.

## Refueling the Raptors

By Staff Sgt. James Lieth  
Staff Photographer

Three KC-135R Stratotankers from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing assisted in a training exercise that involved providing fuel to six F-22 Raptors and four F-16 Fighting Falcons over southwestern New Mexico, July 13.

The goal for members of the 155th ARW was to fly in a larger-than-normal formation and safely provide fuel to all of the participating aircraft, allowing them to complete their own training requirements.

This was not just a routine mission for the 155th ARW, either.

"We don't often get the chance to (refuel) F-22s, it's not a local type of asset that we would have that we would normally do," said 1st Lt. Aaron Self, a 155th ARW pilot. "The fact that we actually went all the way down to New Mexico to do this also is not a normal thing for us."

Self said the aircrew received important training during the mission. "Training-wise, doing more than a two-ship, which we call a large formation...we don't do it very often," said Self. "It's something that we actually do have to accomplish on an annual basis. We don't always get the opportunity to do it in real life – we'll do it in a simulator. So when the opportunity comes up... that's the

great thing about it, it's an actual chance to do it."

Pilots weren't the only Guardsmen benefitting from the mission, either. A few boom operators, who perform in-flight air refueling responsibilities and make contact between tanker and the receiver aircraft, were able to see F-22 Raptors for the first time.

"The bad thing about the F-22 or the good thing about the F-22 – whichever way you want to look at it – it's a precise contact. It does not have a slipway like heavy receivers do where you have a little fudge factor," said Tech. Sgt. Bradley Musick, 155th ARW instructor boom operator. "You have to make precise contact on the 22. It's kind of like the B-2 (Spirit bomber.) You cannot strike the skin of the aircraft or else its big bucks to get that fixed. So, it's good to have them see that because on certain trips you will see F-22s and it's just good practice."

"It's great to get out and fly," added Musick. "Being enlisted and having this job is just great. It's great to have the opportunity to go out with the pilots and refuel other aircraft. You feel part of the team."

According to Self, a mission with so many aircraft sharing the same air space was quite an experience.

"I went out and I flew airplanes today; not only did I fly an airplane, I flew it with two other big airplanes, which is kind of unnatural – and oh yeah, there were ten other fighters buzzing around, too."

## Air Force announces changes to physical fitness test

WASHINGTON (AFNEWS) – Air Force senior leadership announced enhancements to the Air Force's Physical Fitness Assessment program, to be implemented Oct. 1.

In a letter to Airmen, Aug. 20, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III explained the results of the comprehensive review, highlighting the strength of the program and the need for slight improvements.

"We have a tremendous program that has fundamentally changed the Air Force's overall fitness level over the past few years," Welsh said. "The PFT itself is not going to change." But even the

best program can be improved upon, so we are making changes in four different areas to enhance the overall program."

Of the changes coming Oct. 1, the most significant is to the abdominal circumference portion of the test. The AC assesses an Airman's body composition.

Since the Air Force implemented the newest fitness program guidelines in October 2010, only .03 percent of Airmen have failed the AC portion of the test and passed the other three components with a composite score of 75 or higher.

"In the future, if an Airman fails the AC portion of the test, and passes each of the other three components, we'll measure that

Airman using the Body Mass Index taping guidance in DoD instructions," Welsh said. "If the Airman meets the DoD BMI standard, they pass the PFT."

Because AC measurement is integrated into the testing procedure, the Air Force is currently the only branch of the Department of Defense not required to have a separate weight management program.

The other program modifications include realigning the fitness appeal process back to wing commanders, adjusting passing standards for Airmen who can only test on one component of assessment, and changing and simplifying the walk test.

In addition to these efforts, senior leaders

are reviewing how fitness performance is documented on performance reports as part of a larger effort to examine the performance report itself. Those results are expected in the near future.

Though senior leaders are looking to improve the current fitness program, Welsh said he is proud of the Air Force program, and the physically fit culture it has helped to cultivate.

"I believe we have DoD's best designed, best run fitness program, and as a result, we have a force ready for any mission our nation asks us to execute," he said. "I'm extremely proud of how far we've come with our fitness culture."



# Back to the Future

## Curington returns to 92nd Troop Command as commander

By Sgt. Riley Huskey  
Staff Writer

A new dawn began for the Nebraska Army National Guard's 92nd Troop Command as Col. Anita Curington took command of the Lincoln-based organization during a ceremony held Aug. 11 at the Penterman Armory. Outgoing commander Col. Richard Dahlman passed the organizational colors to Curington after three annual training cycles, serving more than two years as Troop Command commander. He will remain the full-time federal operations officer for the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters and will begin to serve in this role as a traditional Guardsmen.

"One of the great things about this position is getting out and visiting every single armory and talking to every full-time Soldier out there," Dahlman said.

"It's quite a different picture from Lincoln or Omaha—these are one- or two-man shops—and the work and service they provide is phenomenal," he added. "They are out there where the rubber meets the road; an Army of One."

Curington currently serves full-time as the state domestic operations officer in the JFHQ. Over the course of her career, she has served as a company and battalion commander within the 92nd Troop Command.

She said she was anxious and excited to return to the organization.

"I grew up in Troop Command, served as the (administrative officer) for Troop Command, so it's a lot like coming back home," Curington



**New Commander:** Col. Anita Curington accepts the 92nd Troop Command colors from Brig. Gen. Michael Navrkal during a change of command ceremony, Aug. 11, at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb.

said. "I'm excited to be able to go out and visit more troops—we lose a lot of that ability while serving in the Joint Force Headquarters."

"So I look forward to watching their training and helping them reach their goals so that they're successful and ready for whatever the next mission comes, state or federal."

Curington has worked previously with 92nd Troop Command's Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Johnson while serving in multiple roles. She said she looks forward to fostering and growing that same relationship to lead troops into a changing Nebraska National Guard.

"As the war effort draws down,



**Saluting:** Col. Richard Dahlman (left) and Col. Anita Curington (right) salute the colors during the 92nd Troop Command change of command ceremony held Aug. 11 at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb.

we are moving into a period of transition and change within the Nebraska National Guard and the military," Curington said. "It's time to get back to the basics and have the Army as a profession, a profession of arms; I really want to focus on those basic Soldiering skills."

As Dahlman departed, he said he looks forward to the extra time he'll spend with his family. He also had some words of wisdom for the

incoming commander. "She's a great officer, so she really needs to only be herself," Dahlman said. "She already has all of skills needed to be successful—maybe better than me in many aspects."

"She doesn't need any advice—but she needs to remember to believe in her Soldiers and in her staff; tell them where you want to go and they'll go there."

With her mind set on the future

of 92nd Troop Command, Curington said she will use the strength and precision of Dahlman's previous actions to grow the military and personal readiness of her Soldiers.

"I'm excited to start this journey with Troop Command," Curington said. "Our units do great things, and I know they will continue to do great things, so it will be a joy to be a part of that ride and watch them soar to the next level."

# Agribusiness team continues to cultivate hopes in Afghanistan

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

*(Editor's Note: This is the second in a two-part series on the work that members of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4 are doing the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.)*

Eleven Nebraska National Guardsmen and one U.S. Army reservist volunteered to deploy thousands of miles from home to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, to make a difference in the field of agriculture. They are currently working with Afghan counterparts in diverse areas of agriculture.

The Nebraska National Guard Agribusiness Development Team No. 4's mission is to mentor and advise the provincial Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and his staff on how to build agricultural capacity in Helmand Province. Not only has the Nebraska ADT already begun accomplishing its mission in the few short months it's been in the country, team members are also teaming with the local Afghan DAIL staff to ensure that the fruits of their labor will continue on long after they're gone.

Several members of ADT No. 4 recently took time to respond to a series of questions given to them via email about their experiences working with and helping Afghan agricultural leaders and farmers.

**Natural Resources Department**

Sgt. Jacqueline Timmerman is a motor transport operator by trade with Chadron's Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company. For the past few months, however, she has been working with the National Resources Department in Helmand Province to create new projects to help improve the local Afghan environment.

"I am currently working on dealing with the budget and the process it entails for requesting and receiving funds," said Timmerman.

Prior to deploying Timmerman graduated with a bachelor's degree in Rangeland Management from Chadron State College. She's now putting that degree to use in Afghanistan.

"With this degree, I have been able to inform the Natural Resources Department with concepts that they may have with new and upcoming projects in the province," said Timmerman.



**Business Meeting:** Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steven Stienike and other members of the Nebraska Agribusiness Development Team No. 4 talk with their Afghan counterparts over lunch during an engagement meeting in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Timmerman said she has high hopes for the Natural Resources Department.

"In the future, I hope for the Natural Resources Department to be able to successfully request and receive a budget that will help rebuild and revive the Natural Resources of the Helmand Province," said Timmerman. "With this budget they will hopefully be able to start more projects throughout Helmand and have a self-sustaining environment that will last for years."

**Developing future plans**

Maj. Thomas Golden was 92nd Troop Command's operations officer until he volunteered to deploy as the executive officer on Nebraska's ADT No. 4. He now works daily as a mentor for the Helmand Province DAIL Plans and Programs manager.

"I am mentoring the DAIL Plans and Programs manager to more efficiently manage current projects and to develop future plans that thoughtfully incorporate district requirements, budget constraints, future agricultural requirements, and market development within and outside of Helmand, Afghanistan," said Golden.

"My current objective as we near the end of this tour is to get the Plans and Programs manager to integrate long-term planning that incorporates a vital strategic view of agriculture in Helmand," added Golden.

According to Golden, what really matters is what the Afghans do now to help themselves.

"I think Nebraska's ADTs have given them some constructive and practical methods to help them do this," said Golden. "Time will tell."

"I've learned that like me, my Afghan counterpart wants what's best for this country and family."

**Making plans**

1st Lt. Michael Kilgore is an intelligence officer by trade with O'Neill's Det. 1, 754th Chemical Company, but now he is working on coordinating ADT No. 4's movements in Afghanistan. It's an important mission.

"I am the movement officer responsible for coordinating movements to each of our locations with our security force as well as the intelligence officer for the team," said Kilgore.

Kilgore is working with the most developed district in Helmand finishing any issues that

they were facing.

According to Kilgore the relationship with the Afghan people is hard and at times frustrating because they don't always want their help.

**Working together**

Senior Master Sgt. Don Zwart from Nebraska Air National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters is currently serving at the Nebraska ADT No. 4 non-commissioned officer-in-charge and the liaison officer in support of the team at Lashkar Gah. Zwart works out of Camp Leatherneck in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

"I work with the British C-9 and the U.S. Marines at Camp Leatherneck," said Zwart.

According to Zwart, being raised in the Midwest has helped a lot with the work he has done in Afghanistan.

"I grew up on a small farm in southeast South Dakota and I understand small farming practices a lot like they are here in Afghanistan," said Zwart.

**Livestock and animal health**

Lt. Col. Sylvia Miller is Nebraska's ADT No. 4 veterinarian from the U.S. Army Reserve 351st Civil Affairs Command. Miller is assisting the DAIL staff to become self-sufficient and established in livestock and animal health.

Miller's background in animal medicine and surgery, along with having been raised on a small dairy farm in Wisconsin, has helped her understand a lot since deploying to Afghanistan.

"I think the small, self-sustaining farm experience has been somewhat helpful here, in terms of understanding," said Miller. "I am acutely aware of the importance of a market for your product."

According to Miller, working with the National Guard has been a great experience.

"It's very different from the Army Reserves, but meeting and working with the National Guard has taught me a lot," said Miller. It has also helped her think about the overall goal that the team members are focusing on during their time in Afghanistan.

"The real ultimate goal should be: safe, sustainable meat, poultry and bee products for the population," said Miller.

*(Editor's note: Missed reading about the other members of the team? Check out the June 2013 edition of the Prairie Soldier at [www.ne.ng.mil](http://www.ne.ng.mil).)*



**Tied Down:** Spc. Kurtis Park and Spc. Yonni Izaquire, both motor transport operators with the 1075th Transportation Company, work to secure firewood before hauling the wood to Indian Reservations in South Dakota, June 13, in Hill City, S.D.



Photos by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Moving Lumber:** A member of the South Dakota Army National Guard unloads firewood from a 1074th Transportation Company truck during the Nebraska Army National Guard company's annual training, June 14, at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

# Black Hills training tops for transportation troops

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

According to the September 2012 edition of Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks- Warrior Skills Level 1, "the Army's basic mission is to train and prepare Soldiers, leaders and units to fight and win in combat. Commanders must identify the tasks that are the units' critical wartime tasks. These tasks then become the unit's mission essential task list (METL)."

Soldiers from the 734th Transportation Battalion and the companies that make up the central and western Nebraska organization were able to do just that when they conducted numerous Army warrior tasks training to help improve unit readiness during their annual training in conjunction with Golden Coyote in Rapid City, S.D., from June 8-22.

Golden Coyote is an exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota that enables commanders and unit officials to focus on METL requirements, warrior tasks and drills. Nebraska Soldiers also had the opportunity to become involved in a real-world humanitarian mission by transporting loads of timber to Indian Reservations throughout South Dakota.

According to the battalion's commander, the exercise proved extremely beneficial for the Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers involved.

"We are doing Army warrior tasks training," said Lt. Col. Curtis Abendroth, 734th Trans. Bn. commander. "They have been able to do combat lifesaver training, too. In addition, they have also done leadership reaction courses, combatives, urban patrols and mounted patrols."

The units also traveled to Camp Guernsey,



**Into Action:** Motor transport operators with the Broken Bow-based Detachment 1, 1074th Transportation Company, pull security outside a building during the urban patrol portion of Golden Coyote at West Camp Rapid, S.D., June 14.

Wyo., for crew-served weapons qualification.

"They have learned a lot of things," said Abendroth. "They set up their Tactical Operations Centers, have been very mobile and we're exercising a lot of the tasks that this unit has to do."

According to Capt. Clayton Engelman, commander of the 1075th Transportation Company, the training provided by the exercise was extremely important in giving his Soldiers the skills they need to better operate

in a variety of missions.

"Better training gives a better experience for our troops," said Engelman. "It's been really good training."

Pvt. Levi Boss, a motor transport operator with Detachment 1, 1074th Trans. Co., said his favorite part of annual training was the urban assault course. There, teams of Soldiers had to successfully navigate through a village while being confronted by an 'armed' opposing force.

"I like tactical situations," said Boss. "I've learned a lot about pulling security. It's a big deal as we found out."

According to Boss, during one particular exercise one of the opposing force members came up from behind and took out Boss's whole squad before they could respond. Boss said he and his squad learned how important it was to have rear security.

According to Abendroth, this was exactly the type of experience that his Soldiers need to be able to better operate in the variety of settings transportation Soldiers often find themselves in.

"Doing all the leadership reaction courses and CLS courses are things that are very valuable to us," said Abendroth. "It's all things we do within our mission at all times."

Abendroth said he was particularly satisfied by how much the Soldiers learned during the two weeks of annual training.

"I am very proud of our Soldiers," said Abendroth. "For the last two years, we have been able to bring most of the battalion out to our annual trainings, being able to have them work together... plus this year we are actually working with other Soldiers."

Nebraska Soldiers had the opportunity to work with Soldiers from all over including; South Dakota, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

"Being able to work with a multi-national force, even though it's not a lot of them, has been a big payoff for our Soldiers," said Abendroth. "And going to work with the Indian Tribes, there's a lot of culture awareness that the Soldiers had to exercise as well."

"Golden Coyote has provided us a high payoff (on) things we normally wouldn't see at most annual trainings," added Abendroth. "So it's been some very high value training for the battalion."

## TIMBER continued from page 1.

mander of the 734th Trans. Bn., which includes units from central, western and northeastern Nebraska, the purpose of the timber hauling mission was two-fold.

"We are taking down timber that has been cut off the national forest around the Black Hills area and it is going to reservations in South Dakota where they will use it for firewood in the winter," said Abendroth.

It was a mission filled with training opportunities for the Soldiers involved.

First, Soldiers drove their truck through the hilly terrain of South Dakota to get to the different loading sites in the national forests. This allowed the drivers multiple opportunities to practice negotiating their trucks through the rugged, uneven terrain while also using maps to successfully navigate their way to their pick-up and drop-off locations.

"We are trying to use the road networks through the Black Hills and the Badlands to do some good drivers training," said Capt. Clayton Engelman, 1075th Transportation Company commander. "The serpentine roads give good opportunity for drivers training for the younger Soldiers."

"We have a lot of (sergeants and staff sergeants) that are full-time truck drivers and we really lean on them heavily," added Engelman. "Especially when we have these real-world missions where we are actually hauling loads. If you're not doing it every day, there are certain things—especially when you're up in the hills like this—with jake-braking and everything like that — a lot of Soldiers, especially in Nebraska, won't experience this as much."

Sgt. Lemuel Sheard III, a motor transport operator with the 1075th Trans. Co. and convoy commander for one of the firewood hauling mis-



Photos by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Loading Operations:** A member of the South Dakota Army National Guard loads firewood on to a Nebraska National Guard 1075th Transportation Company truck during the company's annual training, June 13, in Hill City, S.D.

sions, couldn't agree more.

"It is absolutely great training for our younger Soldiers that don't get to drive trucks every day," said Sheard.

According to unit officials, the timber hauling mission didn't just provide the Soldiers with the opportunity to learn more about driving in difficult terrain, either. They also learned how to properly load trucks, securely fasten down and check their loads to ensure the firewood wasn't moving around in dangerous ways.

In fact, simply having their trucks loaded provided numerous training opportunities. Often the logs were loaded onto the Nebraska trucks by South Dakota Guardsmen operating heavy machinery. Sometimes, though, the Nebraska Soldiers had to actually get 'hands



**Valuable Training:** Sgt. Christopher Reichert, a motor transport operator with the 1074th Truck Company, takes off chains used to secure firewood during a firewood hauling mission.

on' because the machinery couldn't pick up all the wood to load onto the trucks.

"We had to do some loads by hand



**Getting Down To Work:** Two motor transport operators with the 1075th Transportation Company work to secure firewood before hauling it to Indian reservations in South Dakota, June 13, in Hill City, S.D, as a part of their annual training.

because the wood is so dried out," said Engelman. "But it is all working out very well."

"What I learned the most is to listen to the advice superiors have because they have been through it and know what they are doing," said Pfc. Brent Asche, a motor transport operator on his first annual training with the 1075th. "You take their advice and listen to it."

The next day, Soldiers drove their loaded trucks to Indian reservations across the state of South Dakota. The reservations benefited by receiving a heating source for winter.

"It's pretty cool to go out on mission and help people out like this," said Asche.



**Long Stretch:** A Soldier with the 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction), works on the exterior of one of the huts the unit was tasked with building during its annual training at the Mead Training Site, Aug. 6.



**Getting Down To Business:** Members of the 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction), work to finish building huts at the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., during their annual training Aug. 6.

Photos by Sgt. Jason Drager



**Finishing Touches:** Spc. Nathan Vodicka, 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction), applies the finishing touches to window frame during his annual training, Aug. 6, at the Mead Training Site, near Mead, Neb. Members of the Wahoo and Hastings engineering company kept busy during this year's annual training constructing 10 training huts at the Mead Training Site.



**Built To Please:** A Soldier with the 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction), builds a doorframe for a hut at the Mead Training Site Near Mead, Neb., Aug. 6.

# Army Guard engineers use annual training to improve training site

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

The Mead Training Site will have some new additions in the upcoming months thanks to the hard work of the 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction). Based out of Wahoo and Hastings, Neb., the 623rd Eng. Co. traveled to Camp Ashland and Mead, Neb., for its Aug. 2-15 annual training where members of the unit were tasked with building huts at the Mead Training Site that will be used by Soldiers in the future.

Not only did the Nebraska National Guard benefit from returning home from Afghanistan, the 623rd Eng. Co. Soldiers gained a lot from the experience as well.

"Annual training has been great. I have learned a lot of new skills," said Spc. Ashton G. Henderson, an interior electrician. "A.T. has taught me to be more efficient at my job."

The 623rd Eng. Co. is almost two years removed from returning home from Afghanistan. Due to this, the company did not get the chance to do a large scale A.T. last year.

For some newer Soldiers who joined after deployment, this year's A.T. was their first opportunity to work together in platoon-sized units.

"The biggest advantage is we're able to mesh the younger Soldiers with the older ones," said Capt. Adam R. Krcilek, company commander. "We want them just as proficient at their jobs as those Soldiers who deployed."

During their time at annual training, each

platoon was responsible for building three huts measuring 22 feet by 32-feet. To accomplish this deed by their Aug. 12 deadline, members of the company worked eight-hour days on top of conducting physical fitness training in the mornings and sharpening their rope skills in the evenings.

"Everyone in the company appreciates doing what they're trained to do," said 1st Lt. David C. Lange, 3rd Platoon leader. "It's one thing to build training aides at drill, however its motivating for the Soldiers to know they're building something that is going to last and be used."

The Soldiers of the 623rd Eng. Co. were so motivated, in fact, they worked at a pace that would allow them to finish before the deadline. According to Krcilek, by working ahead of schedule, the Soldiers hoped to show Nebraska National Guard officials they're able to help with larger projects.

"Our Soldiers feel like they have a greater purpose after building something that is going to last and actually be used," said Staff Sgt. Josh Graham, a squad leader with the 623rd Eng. Co. "Morale is high right now after finishing the project."

Graham believes the A.T., as a whole, has strengthened the camaraderie within the company and helped raise the Soldiers' confidence in one another.

This project will not be the end of the 623rd's work at Mead. In addition to the 10 huts erected during A.T., the company will use its September and October drills to build two more.

"I would like to see the state utilize us more



**Measuring Up To The Task:** Spc. Adam Hill and Sgt. Jesse Schmitt, both with the 623rd Engineering Company (Vertical Construction), measure electrical pipe for one of the ten huts their unit built during their annual training at the Mead Training Site, Aug. 6

as an asset," said Lange. "That could mean either putting aside more funds or delegating us for state projects instead of hiring outside contractors."

Building the huts was not the only item on the agenda for AT, either.

On the second to last day, the Soldiers of the 623rd Eng. Co. competed in a Best Warrior Challenge. The challenge consisted of Army warrior tasks, land navigation, a 6.2-mile ruck march and the Army physical fitness test.

The winners from the junior enlisted and the noncommissioned officers will move on to represent the company at next year's state Best Warrior Competition.

In the end, the 623rd Engineers gained invaluable experience and skills. Through their hard work and efficient craftsmanship, the rest of the National Guard will now have twelve new huts at their disposal.



**Built To Order:** The Nebraska National Guard will have new huts at its disposal after the 623rd Engineering Company built ten buildings measuring 22-feet by 32-feet during their annual training at the Mead Training Site.



**Dirt Work:** Spc. Christopher Mecure, a food service specialist with the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, digs a trench for the unit's supply tent during annual training as a part of Unified Medic, a joint exercise with reserve medical units at Fort McCoy, Wisc., July 24. The joint exercise involved service members from the U.S. Army Reserve, the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, the U.S. Navy Reserve and the U.S. Air Force.



Photos by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

Wisconsin exercise gives Nebraska Army Guard medical battalion staff chance to lead multi-service effort

# Command And Control

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

Fifty four members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Lincoln-based 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion traveled north to Wisconsin when they participated in a Warrior Exercise (WAREX) held at Fort McCoy, July 19 to Aug. 1.

WAREX was an exercise associated with the larger Unified Medical Exercise where the 110th MMB provided mission support to five U.S. Army Reserve medical units and personnel from a Navy Medical Expeditionary Force.

The 110th MMB was the only National Guard unit to participate in the WAREX.

"We are one of the mission



**Solving Problems:** Pfc. Jonathan Fielder, an information technology specialist with the 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, talks with Staff Sgt. Nicholas Mosel about Forward Operating Base EPW2's communication systems during the unit's annual training, July 25.

command elements of the Unified Medic Operation that's part of WAREX," said Lt. Col. Craig



**Keeping Track Of The Exercise:** Staff Sgt. Travis Engler, 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, reads a map in the 110th MMB's tactical operations center during the unit's annual training at Fort McCoy, Wisc., July 25.



**Water Check:** Sgt. Casey Hughes, a food service specialist with the 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, checks to see if a water buffalo is full during Unified Medic, a warrior exercise at Fort McCoy, Wisc., July 25. Hughes and another Soldier were responsible for providing fresh water daily to Forward Operating Base EPW2.

Strong, 110th MMB commander. "We are responsible for the mission command of six medical units that are training on their medical (military occupational specialties) and performing support for the 1st Medical Brigade, which in this operation is supporting 1st Cavalry Division."

"Our 110th MMB provides command and control guidance and assistance to our down trace units in the areas of preventive medicine, veterinary care, dental care, optometry and combat stress," added Strong.

A part of the unit's mission was to make sure all of its direct reporting

units (DRUs) had the communication capabilities they needed to stay connected and do their jobs.

"I make sure all of our DRUs have internet connection and communication in general," said Pfc. Jonathan Fielder, an information technology specialist with the 110th MMB. "I make sure I am out of their way doing my job and making sure they can do their jobs, too."

It wasn't all work, either. While helping establish and maintain the communication lines, Fielder and other signal members were able to learn about new pieces of equipment from each other. "We are all learning new equipment," said Fielder. "It helps a lot."

"It's pretty good actually to know that I'm helping run the whole forward operating base," added Fielder.

In addition to the signal support, the battalion's food service team provided two hot meals a day and transported fresh water to the forwarding operating base each day.

"The water mission is to have fresh water on the FOB every day," said Staff Sgt. Robert Ternus, head food service specialist for the 110th MMB. "We had issues early on with water, but we got it all straightened out."

"We check to make sure the water is clean and the chlorine level is fine," added Ternus. "We make up to seven or eight trips a day off post to get water."

According to Ternus, he enjoyed being able to boost the morale on the participating FOBs by providing them with the fresh water they needed to maintain their operations.

"They love it," said Ternus. "You can tell from the Soldiers reactions on their face when we pull in with fresh water."

"I've been doing this for 19 years and I really enjoy it," added Ternus.

From the command and control aspect of annual training, members of the 110th MMB enjoyed the experience they got from working with the different DRUs.

"It's a good experience to work with them and learn how things can be done differently," said Staff Sgt. Amber Strong, a medical laboratory specialist with the 110th MMB. "The DRUs bring things to the table that we don't know and vice versa."

According to the Soldiers, the joint environment was an overall success.

"In today's environment, everything is going to joint," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Anderson, battalion command sergeant major. "And this has really been one of the best exercises as far as a joint exercise."

"Everyone bringing their specialties here and working together," added Anderson.

Strong agreed. "It does provide us real live training with units that are tasked under us."

## Nebraska mechanics put Wisconsin training to good use

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

When Spc. Kevin Weyers of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion came upon a disabled Humvee located off of the main road in a creek surrounded by trees and tall grass, July 24, he assessed the situation and then realized he couldn't drive the Humvee out.

With annual training in full swing at Fort McCoy, Wisc., Weyers, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with the Nebraska Army National Guard's Lincoln-based battalion headquarters, decided to step into a leadership position and teach several U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from the 110th MMB's direct reporting units how to properly recover the Humvee.

The opportunity was just one of many that the Soldiers took advantage of while participating in the Warrior Exercise at Fort McCoy.

"We were practicing winching operations and showing a couple new Soldiers how the whole operation works," said Weyers. "They were able to get hands-on training and actually see how it works."

For this particular exercise, the training revolved around the Nebraska Guard unit's new heavy expanded mobility tactical truck wrecker, commonly referred to as a HEMMT. "We brought out our new HEMMT wrecker and stretched its legs, so to speak," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Craig Niemeyer, unit maintenance warrant officer for the 110th MMB. "The type of problems and scenarios that they were forced to solve was very helpful compared to a regular environment they might be used to at drill."

"Weyers is a H8 certified mechanic," added Niemeyer, "so I let him be in charge of the operations." The H8 certification is for Soldiers who are either wheeled vehicle mechanics or machinists. It requires them to pass classroom and hands-on courses on how to operate a wheeled wrecker and recover a vehicle.

Weyers said he enjoyed getting the opportunity to pass along some



**Recovery Operations:** U.S. Army Reserve and Nebraska Army National Guard mechanics work together to set up recovery operations during annual training at Fort McCoy, Wisc.

there helping me or showing someone else how to do it."

With the Wisconsin exercise being only Weyers' third annual training since enlisting in the Nebraska National Guard, he said he wanted to prove to his superiors that he could properly train other Soldiers.

Later, he said he felt like he had done just that.

"It was my first time," said Weyers. "I thought I did pretty good. I taught them how I would like to be taught."

According to Niemeyer, he and the rest of the 110th MMB maintenance section knew they could entrust Weyers to get the job done.

"It was very fulfilling that you can pass along that knowledge," said Niemeyer. "And Weyers is

of the skills he learned during the certification course.

"It went pretty good because I got to pass it down to the new Soldiers," said Weyers. "That way maybe one day they could be out

growing to be a non-commissioned officer."

In addition to recovery operations, the battalion mechanics also maintained all the vehicles and generators for their forward operating base during the unit's annual training at Fort McCoy from July 19 thru Aug. 1.

"We've changed some tires, worked on problems with brakes on a light medium tactical vehicle and fixed that," said Weyers. "We are working on a couple trailers and mostly generators because they are running 24 hours."

Also, because the unit only has one generator mechanic, this gave Weyers and other mechanics the opportunity to be cross-trained.

"It's pretty good to be cross-referenced because (the generator mechanic) helps us out and in turn we help (the generator mechanic) out," said Weyers. "It's nice to help each other out."

According to the Soldiers, the annual training provided them a great experience to be able to work hands-on and learn firsthand from problems that took place.

"I think they enjoyed it and learned a lot," said Niemeyer. "That's what it is all about."

Niemeyer added, "It's really about building those skills that you are going to keep for the rest of your life."



# ‘Chopped’ or Championship?

## Chadron Soldiers hope menu for success translates into national title

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

The members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, based out of Chardon, Neb., wanted to prove to units across the state they have what it takes to win. And winning the state level of the 46th Annual Philip A. Connelly Awards Competition for Excellence in Army Food Service, didn't fill the appetite of this team of Western Nebraska cooks, field sanitation specialists and security members. They're hungry for a national championship.

The Soldiers of Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co. made it one step closer to their dream when they found out they were to compete in the regional cooking competition, Aug. 3, at Camp Guernsey, Wyo. That's also when they realized that they've got a lot more work to do to compete against the best food service teams in the country.

"There is a lot more preparation for regionals compared to the state-level," said Staff Sgt. Howard Taylor III, food operations sergeant for Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co.

According to the Soldiers, they spent months preparing for the regional competition, both on and off duty. That work, they said, both prepared them for the competition and made them better Soldiers.

"We have done a lot of preparation," said



Photo by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**All Together Now.... Cheese!** Members of Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, pose for a photo by their 1057th Truckstop sign during a practice run for the Philip A. Connelly Competition on July 31 at Camp Guernsey, Wyo. The Soldiers were preparing for the regional level of the competition.

Sgt. Antony Wilcox, unit first cook. "We have been studying technical manuals and field guides for everything."

"It's definitely great to brush up on the things us cooks don't do on a regular basis," added Wilcox, "like training on firing posi-

tions."

During the days prior to the regional competition the unit conducted rehearsals and practice runs in field environments, preparing the same competition menu for 25 Soldiers in order to help prepare for the

challenges they would encounter preparing a multi-course meal for 100 Soldiers during the regional evaluation. The menu included Texas tortilla soup, braised pork chops, mashed potatoes, cream onion gravy, peas with mushrooms, tossed calico vegetable salad and oatmeal raisin bar.

"We have cooked everything in the field, so that way the cooks get used to it," said Taylor. "We cook the meal and modify it as we see fit."

Spc. Heather Kersey, a food service specialist with Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co., agreed that having time to conduct rehearsals allowed the team members to not only perfect their cooking skills, but also their unit cohesion. "We have been running through the practice menu and (trying) to make sure we work together as a team and get our work done," said Kersey. "We work really well together."

According to the Soldiers, having support from their command and the Nebraska Military Department made a difference during the long days in the field preparing for the competition.

That was particularly evident in the individual Soldiers' morale, said Taylor.

"I think it brings their spirits up a lot," added Taylor. "It shows that on this side of the state we are supported."

Regardless of the outcome, the Soldiers know that all the time and effort they have put into preparing for the competition will not only make them better as Soldiers, but also bring their unit together as a whole.

## Guardsmen pull out all stops during regional cooking competition

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

Making a meal for 100 Soldiers might seem like a challenge in itself, but throw those Soldiers into a field environment and then add a group of evaluators watching every move made, and the level of pressure ramps up considerably.

Soldiers from the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, found that out when they challenged themselves to turn up the heat by adding their own ingredients to the 46th Annual Philip A. Connelly menu during the Aug. 3 regional competition at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.

According to unit officials, the August scenario required the members of the Chadron-based Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co., to provide support to the Nebraska Army Guard's 734th Transportation Battalion, which was conducting convoy and logistical support for a simulated firefighting mission. They were responsible for continuing this support until the fires were 100 percent contained.

The Nebraskans' menu included Texas tortilla soup, braised pork chops, mashed potatoes, cream onion gravy, peas with mushrooms, tossed calico vegetable salad and oatmeal raisin bar served with assorted fresh fruit and beverages. According to the Guard cooks, they adjusted the menu to suit the taste buds of the Soldiers.

Pvt. Steven Parker, a food service specialist with Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co., said, "I left on the skins of the potatoes to add more nutrients to the dish and sautéed the peas and mushrooms instead of boiling the peas because it adds more flavor to the dish."

"I think the Soldiers like the mashed potatoes better with the skins from the feedback I have received," he added.

He wasn't the only one putting individual spins on the menu, either. Pfc. Kyle Burton, another food service specialist, used seasoning salt instead of plain salt to add flavor to



**Yum:** Sautéed peas and mushrooms are readied for hungry Soldiers during the regional level of the Philip A. Connelly Competition at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.

the pork chops.

That level of individual creativity is pretty important considering that Connelly competition evaluators were using a 1,000 point evaluation list to determine who will represent the region in the upcoming national championships. Based on the fact that the evaluators were grading everything from entry control points, site security and command support to the actual food service and field sanitation, every point was important.

It also means that every member of the unit has an important role to play, not just the cooks.

"The field sanitation team is a huge part of the competition we are in," said Staff Sgt. Howard Taylor III, the food operations sergeant for Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co. "So, I have been working with the field sanitation team to make sure they have everything they need."

Spc. Heather Kersey, a food service specialist with Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co., couldn't agree more.

"The field sanitation team and security team play a major part of the competition," said Kersey. "We are



Photos by Sgt. Heidi Krueger

**Two Person Job:** Pvt. Steven Parker and Sgt. Anthony Wilcox, food service specialists with Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, pour boiled potatoes into a strainer during a practice run of the regional level of the Philip A. Connelly Competition at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., July 31.



**Supporting The Company Effort:** Spc. Dwayne Nielsen, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, makes sure a generator is running properly during the regional level Connelly competition, Aug. 3.

thankful everyone is helping out." Going into the competition the food service and field sanitation specialists made sure they had a well thought-out strategy.

**See COOKS on 16.**



**Serving Line:** Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, food service specialists serve chow to Soldiers during the regional level of the Philip A. Connelly Competition on Aug. 3 at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.





**Nebraska History 101:** John Gale, Nebraska secretary of state, talks to members of the Czech Armed Forces about the history of Nebraska and its unique form of government during a visit to the state capitol in Lincoln, Neb., June 10.

# Battlefield surveillance brigade’s annual training takes on European feel

## ■Nebraska Army Guard headquarters staff host counterparts from Czech Republic

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

The Nebraska Army National Guard’s 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade’s annual training in June took on a distinct European accent, June 6-11, when they were visited by five members of the Czech Republic armed force’s 53rd Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare Brigade.

According to Lt. Col. Troy Paisley, deputy commander of the Lincoln, Neb.-based 67th BfSB, the visit, which was part of the Nebraska National Guard’s on-going relationship with Czech military through

the State Partnership Program, was designed to give both organizations the opportunity to exchange information about their intelligence and communications capabilities.

Paisley said it was definitely an eye-opening exchange.

“They were especially surprised to see the massive amount of equipment and technical abilities of the 67th BfSB,” said Paisley. He added that the Nebraska Guardsmen were in turn surprised to learn the 53rd REWB has both similar and different missions than the 67th BfSB.

Probably the biggest benefit of the visit, said Paisley, was simply the opportunity to sit down and talk through common missions and problems.

“The highlight of the engagement was the interaction between the Czech officers and the Nebraska National Guard,” said Paisley. “There are some very common concerns, i.e: shrinking budgets, personnel losses, etc.”

While in Nebraska, the five



**Exchanging Information:** Maj. Petr Snajdarek, Czech Republic armed forces, shares information about the Czech’s 53rd Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare Brigade with members of the Nebraska Army National Guard during a meeting at Camp Ashland’s Memorial Hall, June 8, during the Nebraska Army Guard’s 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade annual training.

Czech officers visited the brigade’s annual training sites at the Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb., Camp Ashland and the Mead Training Site. They also had the opportunity to tour the Guard’s various training lanes while also interacting with members of the Nebraska National Guard. They also had the opportunity to ride in a Nebraska Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter, tour the Nebraska National Guard air base and state capitol in Lincoln, and participate in an officers’ call with the 67th BfSB.

According to Maj. Petr Snajdarek, the visit was a complete

success for his fellow Czech officers.

“We have had a really good experience,” said Snajdarek, adding that during their discussions with Col. Brett Andersen, commander of the 67th BfSB, and Brig. Gen. Michael Navrkal, assistant adjutant general, Army, the two groups discussed the possibility of continuing their relationship next year during the Nebraska Army Guard brigade’s annual training. “We would like to return for that exercise.”

Snajdarek added that because the two organization’s share common missions and hail from common cultural backgrounds, continued partnership activities simply make

sense.

“I think they are both very similar organizations,” he said, adding that the Nebraska National Guard and the Czech armed forces have common similarities when it comes to the relationship between the military and the civilian communities that support them. “Personally, I think the National Guard is the perfect project.”

Paisley agreed, saying that he, too, felt that the goals of the visit were all accomplished.

“Outstanding visit,” he said. “We met all of our objectives and hope to continue future training with the Czech forces.”



**Final Preparations:** Pfc. Kyle Burton, a food service specialist with Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, cooks pork chops during the regional level of the Philip A. Connelly Competition, Aug. 3, at Camp Guernsey, Wyo. The pork chops were cooked on both sides for color and flavor before getting braised with different seasonings.

## COOKS continued from page 15.

“Our plan is to get things done as quickly and as efficiently as possible,” said Spc. Derek Harris, a field sanitation specialist with Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co., “in order to make a good impression on our evaluators.”

Yet, even though their plan was to get everything done as quickly and efficiently as they could, the safety of the Soldiers and the environment was the main priority.

“Our primary goal is to prevent disease and non-battle injuries,” said Harris. “We are also making sure we leave a little as a footprint on the environment as we can.”

With all the hard work and dedication put into the competition, unit Soldiers said they hope they can make it to the Department of the Army level and enjoy another great time in the field with their unit.

“Everyone is more confident and knows they did what they needed to do,” said Sgt. Antony Wilcox, first cook for Det. 1, 1057th Trans. Co. “I think we stand a really good chance.”

Kersey agreed, adding that when all was said and done, they worked together better than they ever had.

“I think we did really well,” said Kersey. “We are all really excited to

make it to the next level.”

And regardless of how they eventually do, according to Capt. Timothy Buskira, unit commander, they’ve already been extremely successful.

“Seeing this kind of work at this level of competition makes me proud,” said Buskira. “They have worked really hard to get where they are at and have done a great job.”

“I know win, lose or draw this will make our unit better in all aspects.”

*(Editor’s Note: Read upcoming issues of the Prairie Soldier to see if they make it to nationals.)*



**Making A Tasty Treat:** Spc. Heather Kersey, a food service specialist with Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, spoons oatmeal raisin cookie dough onto a pan during a practice run of the regional competition for the 46th Annual Philip A. Connelly Competition, July 31, at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.



**Under The Microscope:** Sgt. Anthony Wilcox, first cook for Detachment 1, 1057th Transportation Company, slices cucumbers as evaluators watch over him during the regional level of the 46th Annual Philip A. Connelly Competition, Aug. 3, at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.



# What If?



**Joint Force Headquarters:** The June 18-21 Continuity of Operations exercise was designed to test the Joint Force Headquarters staff's ability to move to an alternate site in the event the new headquarters building is suddenly made unusable because of a natural or man-made disaster.

## Exercise tests Nebraska Guard staff's ability to continue emergency response mission should disaster destroy new headquarters

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

The exercise began like most do with a question: "What if?" "What if a major tornado destroyed the Nebraska Military Department's newly-built joint force headquarters building located at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, while causing significant damage to the surrounding Army and Air National Guard facilities and structures as well as local civilian neighborhoods in the surrounding area?"

How would the members of the Guard's Joint Force Headquarters and the Nebraska Emergency Agency respond? Could they rapidly move to an alternate site and quickly begin coordinating the emergency response?

According to Col. Anita Curington, domestic operations officer in the Guard's Joint Operations Office, the questions were the basis for a Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters Continuity of Operations Exercise – more commonly called a COOP-EX – conducted June 18-21.

The goal, she said, was to test the staff's ability to move to an alternate work site at GTS and quickly reestablish its ability to provide such core functions as personnel accountability and management, emergency response planning and coordination, supply and logistical management, maintenance support, and communication capabilities in support of a state emergency response.

"As an agency, we need to be able to work from another location if, for some reason, our primary location was compromised from either a natural disaster or significant event," Curington said.



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**New Tenants:** Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Panipinto, state training office, slides his office designation into place on a door at the Nebraska National Guard's alternate site during a Continuity of Operations Exercise held June 18-21. The exercise was designed to test the Joint Force Headquarters staff's ability to continue operations in the event that the new headquarters is destroyed by a storm.

"This exercise allowed us to move our primary staff sections and key personnel to the alternate location and see if we could access the databases and information needed to conduct mission essential tasks."

Those are actually pretty important questions, said Brig. Gen. Scott Gronewold, assistant adjutant general for Joint Operation, considering the level of destruction that's been seen recently following several major storms.

"In light of recent catastrophic disasters, such as Midwest tornadoes and Gulf/Atlantic hurricanes, it is important to validate the written contingency plans and make the

required changes to ensure we can not only perform day-to-day operations, but respond to the needs of our citizens."

Curington said the three-day exercise was actually part of a state-wide effort to ensure that governmental services can continue during an emergency situation.

"Several years ago, the Governor's Office asked each of his staff sections to conduct a Continuity of Operations exercise," she said. "The Military Department began the deliberate planning process to ensure that as an agency, we could COOP. The overall goal was for the JFHQ and NEMA to move



**Preparing A Briefing:** (From left) Col. Byron Diamond, Lt. Col. David Dubois and 1st Sgt. David Grams work together to prepare a briefing on how the Nebraska National Guard's state logistics office will support a state emergency mission from the Guard's alternate site. The Continuity of Operations Exercise was designed to test the Joint Force Headquarters staff's ability to rapidly regain access to critical working systems in the event a storm knocks out the new headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

to our alternate location and see if we could access the databases and information needed to conduct mission essential tasks."

In particular, said Gronewold, the goal was to "provide an honest and accurate assessment on

the (Nebraska National Guard's) ability to continue operations in the event of a major disaster that directly affected our command infrastructure and personnel."

Helping oversee the massive

See COOP-X on 18.



# State adds emergency response decontamination team

By 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

The Nebraska Army and Air National Guard offer several capabilities when it comes to assisting first responders at the scene of any incident. The state can now add another team to the fray following an incident involving any type of contamination. The Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing recently fielded a 15-person 976A Patient Decontamination Team designed to rapidly respond to a scene where first responders are overwhelmed by an incident with contamination. Because a response could be required anytime on or off the installation, the team is comprised of full-time 155th ARW personnel and is led by a 155th Medical Group member who functions as the team chief. The remaining team members come from any non-medical position from organizations within the wing.

The team conducted their initial training at the Nebraska National Guard air base Aug. 14-15. The purpose of the team is to fill the gap in time from the incident itself and the time the Guard's chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive enhanced response force package, or CERFP, arrives on scene.

"There's a gap in when an event happens to when the CERFP comes in," said Senior Master Sgt. Scott Boden, a health systems specialist who also serves as team chief for the new group.

"We're the fill-in for the six-hour gap until the CERFP gets in line," he added.

The team is equipped with a trailer containing all the equipment necessary to provide a rapid system to decontaminate victims who flee an incident, or those partially decontaminated at the scene, but who require thorough decontamination prior to receiving medical attention or coming into contact with personnel on the installation who do not have personal protective equipment.

According to Boden, the team has a stand-alone capability to decontaminate a maximum of 100 contaminated patients – 40 who cannot walk and 60 who can. The Patient Decon (PD) system consists of a tent with a floor runoff-containment system and additional decontamination materials.

When deployed by a well-trained, fully manned team, the PD system is required to be operational within 20 minutes of notification, assembly or upon the arrival of contaminated patients. The team is able to decontaminate 6-10 litter patients and 10-15 ambulatory patients per hour.

"After an incident there's going to be people standing around not knowing what to do, where to go," said Boden. "At least we can provide a quick way to get decontaminated as opposed to them going in an ambulance and further contaminating a regular hospital."

During the two-day training, Alex Ibarra, a government contractor with Federal Resources Supply Company, said his goal was to train the 155th ARW personnel how to set up and employ their equipment. He added that the new 976A Decon. Team is basically a smaller, more agile version of the Nebraska National Guard's CERFP, intended to "stop the leak in the dam" until the CERFP is on



Photos by 2nd Lt. Alex Salmon

**Up In A Flash:** Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard 155th Air Refueling Wing's 976A Patient Decontamination Team set up a decontamination tent during the team's training session at the Fuels Hangar at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 15. The new team is made up of 15 full-time Air Guard members and is designed to work alongside first responders.



**Good Wingman:** Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard 155th Air Refueling Wing's 976A Patient Decontamination Team don protective suits during the team's training session at the fuels hangar at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 15.

site and functional.

"It's one of those jobs that you have to be there, because if they're not there, then the hospitals get overwhelmed by patients that present themselves that could possibly be contaminated," said Ibarra.

"So if (this) package is not there, then you would have plenty of dirty patients that would just show up at the hospital...and if they are dirty when they get to the hospital, you're just going to contaminate the whole hospital," he added.



**Squeaky Clean:** Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard 155th Air Refueling Wing's 976A Patient Decontamination Team stand in a decontamination tent during the team's training session at the fuels hangar at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 15. The new team is designed to deploy to an incident quickly to fill the gap in time until the Guard's chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive enhanced response force package, or CERFP, arrives on scene.

Members of the team were excited to take part in the training and are proud to be available to help if a situation arose.

"I think it's an incredible opportunity to be able to be part of this," said Airman 1st Class Zachary Silva, a crew chief in the Repair and Reclamation Maintenance Shop. "If something were to happen within the local

community, I could potentially be called to help with it and help people within my local community."

"Living in Nebraska, a lot of fertilizer is used, which can be very hazardous to people," he added. "So there's always a chance, as terrible as it would be. If it were to happen, it's still good knowing we're prepared."

## COOP-X continued from page 17.

task of developing and then conducting the exercise was Maj. Eric Hunsberger, deputy joint training and joint strategic planning officer for the Nebraska National Guard's JFHQ. He estimated that he spent approximately 250-300 hours working on the exercise plan.

Hunsberger said the exercise was designed with an important purpose in mind. "This type of exercise ensures that we are able to respond to domestic threats – man-made or natural – and maintain continuous operations supporting both our state and federal missions."

Curington and Hunsberger agreed that one of the keys to successfully transitioning to an alternate site was involving the Guard's interagency partners – both within the state and in those states bordering Nebraska – early on in the process. Another

lesson, they said, was determining how to reestablish communications in the somewhat austere conditions at the alternate site.

"Communications is always important," said Curington, adding that by design, the exercise controllers took away the staff's access to the department's computerized portal, which required the staff members to develop new ways to access the information they needed. "The lack of a portal created some gaps because everyone hung their shared information here."

Another lesson involved determining which staff members were required to relocate to the alternate site early on to maintain the organization's ability to continue to conduct operations, said Curington.

Gronewold said recent personnel turnover was also a major challenge for the exercise planners.

"Just between the time table-top exercises were conducted and the field exercise was executed, there were a number of new faces that were unfamiliar with all the prior preparation that had taken place," he said.

"Technology will also continue to be our vulnerable area," Gronewold added. "The (state information management office) put in an extensive amount of effort to pull this off, (but hardware and software changes will continue to require providers and users to) 'identify the technology chokepoints and address them, or we quickly become ineffective.'"

Despite the problems, Gronewold, Curington and Hunsberger each called the Nebraska National Guard's first COOP-EX a qualified success, adding that the level of understanding and expertise the staff gained during the three-day exercise will undoubtedly help the organization as it moves forward with its planning.

"Overall, it was a success as it brought the staff together to address their current plans, test their capabilities from an alternate site and tactically maintain continuity of operations," said Hunsberger.

"Both the Air and Army Guard were 'all in,' which is sometimes difficult to achieve with competing priorities," said Gronewold, adding



Photo by Maj. Keivn Hynes

**Working Together:** Col. Anita Curington, state joint operations officer, conducts a meeting at the Nebraska National Guard's alternate headquarters facility, June 18.

that the extensive preparation that was put into the new COOP site and the exercise definitely paid off. "Positive attitudes with a sense of urgency was apparent, which is also sometimes difficult to do."

"I think it went really well,"

Curington added. "It was the first time that the JFHQ and NEMA relocated to an alternate site and tested the systems. We identified areas that need improvement to ensure success should we have to conduct a COOP real-world."



# Putting it all together

## Battlefield surveillance brigade Soldiers use annual training to prepare for future

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

The 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and supporting units conducted annual training at a number of sites throughout Nebraska and beyond, June 1-15.

The mission for the AT was to prepare the brigade's headquarters' staff and support elements to operate and communicate with operationally controlled units within the scope of the brigade's mission essential task list responsibilities, said Maj. Sean P. O'Neill, 67th BfSB.

Some of the key tasks and goals included updating standard operating procedures, conducting troop leading procedures and training on the military decision-making process.

Approximately 420 Soldiers from the 234th Network Support Company, 1167th Brigade Support Maintenance Company, 402nd Military Police Battalion, 195th Forward Support Company, and 192nd Law and Order Company worked together to support the training.

The units were spread throughout the state to accomplish their mission. The locations used included the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., Camp Ashland, and the Mead Training Site. Some even went to Fort Riley, Kan. to train.

One of the bigger tasks during the training was constructing a

Standard Integrated Command Post (SICP). The modular system consisted of both a physical structure and an internal communication piece.

The SICP is designed to give commanders the ability to integrate Tactical Operations Centers and provide a common operating picture.

The weather also proved to be a small, but manageable, hiccup during the training. Due to rain and wind, the set-up of the SICPs had to be sped up to ensure the brigade was not putting them up during a period of heightened risk.

Fortunately, the brigade was lucky enough to have the assistance of a Wisconsin National Guard weather team. The team attached themselves to the brigade throughout the AT and provided information and guidance on weather patterns and forecast.

Like any large-scale training, such as this, the primary key in coordinating this many units over such a large geographical area is planning. Having details ironed-out prior is essential to success.

O'Neill also referenced utilizing communication equipment such as radios and Blue Force Trackers to help coordinate with the units.

"This year's annual training went very well," said O'Neill. "The staff and the supporting units were able to establish, refine, or correct our (standard operating procedures) and for some Soldiers that have not been with the brigade or might not have



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Working In A Maze:** A member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, works to set up a portion of the organization's Standard Integrated Command Post, June 8, during a soggy day of training at the Mead Training Site.

had an experience at a level such as this, it gave them an opportunity to experience and learn how the unit operates."



**Close Quarters:** Spc. Kevin Broich, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, sets up a trailer during his annual training at the Mead Training Site, June 8. The unit spent June 1-15 training at a number of sites in Nebraska and Kansas in preparation for next year's annual training in Colorado.

This year's A.T. was an opportunity for the supporting units and brigade staff to crawl/walk through operations and procedures in preparation for next year's annual training that will take place at Fort Carson, Colo. That A.T. will focus on unit and brigade collective training and will include portions of the 67th BfSB's operationally controlled unit from California, the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion.



Courtesy photos

## Maintaining the Nebraska Guard's spiritual health during annual training



(Above) **Field Services:** Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Thomlison, chaplain for the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, conducts Catholic Mass on Sunday, July 21, at Fort McCoy, Wisc., during the 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion's annual training.

(Left) **Giving Thanks:** Chaplain (1st Lt.) Zachary Brueningsen completes his first road march with the Nebraska Army National Guard's 195th Forward Support Company (Airborne) and says a word of prayer for Sunday service at the Greenleaf Training Site marksmanship ranges, Sunday, June 2.



Photo courtesy of Maj. James Hewitt

**Job Hunting:** Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from the Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) attend the "Hiring our Heroes" event in Omaha, Neb., during their annual training on June 12. The event had more than 65 employers looking to hire military veterans. The opportunity gave several Soldiers who were looking for employment great leads on jobs in the local area.

## Unit helps Soldiers find jobs

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Members of the Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) had the opportunity to check out local career opportunities when they attended the June 12 "Hiring Our Heroes" job fair at the Douglas County Centre in Omaha, Neb.

According to Maj. James Hewitt, commander of the 195th FSC, the job fair gave the participating Soldiers an opportunity to get some "great leads on jobs in the local area."

The Hiring Our Heroes initiative is an on-going cooperative effort between the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Nebraska Department of Labor and the Nebraska National Guard to help veterans and military spouses find meaningful employment in Nebraska.

"We are proud to be part of this initiative to help veterans and military spouses find meaningful employment here in Nebraska," said Gov. Dave Heineman, during a June 11 news conference. "There are approximately 4,700 Army

and Air National Guardsmen and women in Nebraska and thousands more in the U.S. Reserves and active military. The enthusiasm surrounding Hiring Our Heroes shows that the courage and sacrifice demonstrated by these men and women has not gone unnoticed."

According to officials, 67 employers attended the job fair while 200 veterans and their spouses attended.

Hewitt said his unit helped prepare his Soldiers for the job fair by first hosting a day-long "Resource Day," June 9, which covered a number of subjects of importance for unit members and their families.

The subjects included how to reach out for help from counselors for deployment-related issues, military and educational resources, and classes on resume writing and finding employment.

This marked the tenth Hiring Our Heroes job fair since the first event was held in Lincoln in April 2012. Others have been held in Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Alliance, Holdrege, Papillion, Beatrice and Grand Island. More than 1,500 military veterans and their spouses have attended.



# Czech ambassador thanks National Guard during visit to Nebraska

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

For the past 20 years the Nebraska National Guard has partnered with the Czech Republic and its military to exchange ideas, resources and training. The Czech Republic's ties to Nebraska, however, run far deeper than just the last two decades. Nebraska boasts the largest percentage of Czech-Americans per overall population in the United States; Nebraska is home to the Czech capital of the U.S. — Wilber, Neb.; and the state even has a township that shares the same name as the Czech Republic's capital city — Prague.

Petr Gandalovic, the Czech ambassador to the United States, hopes to help strengthen the partnership between his country and the state of Nebraska. Gandalovic visited the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters, Aug. 12, for a luncheon where he spoke to attendees about the Czech Republic's partnership with Nebraska. "For us in the Czech Republic, (the Nebraska National Guard is) a good example of how to combine professional, voluntary, military service with high-quality standards and training," said Gandalovic. "We think we can learn a lot from how the Nebraska National Guard is organized." The Nebraska National Guard and the Czech Republic have been partnered for twenty years through the National Guard State Partnership Program. The program was designed to partner U.S. states with European countries in an effort to support the command's security cooperation objectives and enhance international security. Since the end of the Cold War, Nebraska has been important in helping the Czech military fully integrate into NATO, said Gandalovic. With current military drawdowns, how-



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager  
**Distinguished Visitor:** Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovic (center) poses for a photo with U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Aug. 12.

ever, there are concerns the partnership between Nebraska and the Czech Republic will soften. "We have to find new ways to exercise together and keep those exercises alive," said Gandalovic. Accompanying Ambassador Gandalovic to the luncheon was U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry. Fortenberry referred to the ambassador as a close friend in the diplomatic community and stressed the importance of having a dialogue about furthering ties with the Czech Republic. Both Fortenberry and Gandalovic agreed a new transatlantic trade agreement between the U.S. and the European Union is important and would bring many opportunities and benefits to Nebraska, farmers and the agricultural community as a whole. In the coming weeks, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, the adjutant general of Nebraska, and a dozen others will travel to the Czech Republic to help strengthen the partnership through shared training and ideas. Gandalovic planned on ending his trip by visiting the town of Prague and meeting with the Czech-American community.

# Nebraska attorney general cautions Guardsmen to be wary of financial scams

By Senior Airman Mary Thach  
Staff Writer

Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning visited the Nebraska National Guard air base on 'Military Consumer Protection Day' to brief Soldiers, Airmen and their families about scams targeting the military community, how to avoid being a victim of fraud, and how to get help if already victimized.

During the July 17 visit to the Lincoln air base, Bruning said Nebraska military members and their families are vulnerable to fraudulent activity because of frequent travel, being away from home for extended periods of time and facing fears that the general public might not encounter.



Bruning

The Nebraska military force is made up of more than 14,000 active, Guard and reserve members and 141,000 veterans. These numbers, and the trusting nature of Nebraskans, presents a large target base for scam artists to take advantage of and make easy money because of a military family's unique circumstances, said Bruning. "Scammers know you make a healthy wage with regular paychecks," said Bruning. "Unfortunately, while you are working to protect us, scammers are looking for ways to make a quick buck." According to Bruning, Nebraska's Consumer Protection Division aims to inform and educate service members about deceptive business and trade practices, scams, mortgage and lending problems, and identity theft, to name a

few. Bruning said to be skeptical if people offer inexpensive or free travel, specialized life insurance policies and financial planning services. Do not be afraid to ask neighbors, family, friends, a banker or a trusted advisor if doubts arise about an offer or business. In short, there are no freebies. In addition to faulty business practices, the military's number one reported complaint in 2012 was identity theft. Thirty-seven percent of all military consumer complaints were identity theft and the number will continue to grow if people are not educated on how to protect themselves, said Bruning. Bruning said if a person receives an email, letter or phone call from someone claiming to be a financial institution to which the member belongs, be cynical. If they ask for information they should already have on file such as a birth date, account number, credit card number, pin number or three-digit security code, this is not one's bank or credit card company. This is a scam. If this does happen, Bruning said hang up and call the institution back using a trusted phone number or go to the physical location to confirm they contacted you for personal information. According to Bruning, Nebraska's Consumer Protection recovered \$3.7 million in 2012, and has, on average, recovered more than \$1 million annually since 2003. During 2012, the Consumer Protection office fielded more than 8,000 complaints. Of those complaints, 3,500 cases were opened while 3,455 were closed. "We want to arm you with the tools you need to protect you and your families from scammers," said Bruning. "Over the years, we have seen scams come and go. But one thing remains the same: if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

# National Guard move to East Campus readiness center, changes to staff affects way retirees to receive service

Greetings. It seems like this summer has flown by and soon something else will be flying. A lot of changes have occurred over the past few months, including retirements and changes of command at all levels. All retirees receive a complimentary one-year membership to the Nebraska Military Retiree Council and will receive all notices and news for that year. Should you elect to remain on the rolls, dues are a mere \$5 per year. This \$5 covers all email updates, mail, notices to retiree briefings, socials, and items of interest to all retirees and widows. Congratulations to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac on his selection as our adjutant general. He and his team are supportive of the retiree community and we look forward to having a great relationship with the Military Department. The East Campus National Guard Armory, formerly the U.S. Army Reserve's Pershing Armory, is now home to the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and the site of the newest ID Card center. IDs are no longer available in the Spirit of 76 Armory. Call (402) 309-8014 to schedule ID card appointments. The Army National Guard, in conjunction with the NMRC, will be hosting a retiree briefing on Oct. 19 at the Kearney armory. Additional details will be sent out soon. If you have any questions or comments, email me at [william.h.nelson48.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:william.h.nelson48.ctr@mail.mil), or call (402) 309-7105. Thank you for your dedicated service to the National Guard and

## Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

### DEERS/ID Card Stations within Nebraska

- ♦ G1 – 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- ♦ East Campus Readiness Center, 2000 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503: (402) 309-8014.
- ♦ Penterman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln (402) 309-1724/1719;
- ♦ Air Guard (Lincoln Air Base) Bldg 600 Room E209: (402) 309-1542;
- ♦ Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-5019;
- ♦ Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- ♦ Norfolk Armory 817 S 1st St Norfolk: (402) 309-8908/8900;
- ♦ 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- ♦ The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

Remember, you need two forms of ID when you arrive for your appointment.

this great country. Lastly, our thanks to Sgt. 1st Class Austin Behnk as he moves to a new position on Sept. 1. **■From Sgt. 1st Class Austin Behnk:** My phone number is (402) 309-8151 and email address is [austin.j.behnk@mail.mil](mailto:austin.j.behnk@mail.mil). Staff Sgt. Mandy Hatcher's phone number is (402) 309-8164 and [mandy.r.hatcher@mail.mil](mailto:mandy.r.hatcher@mail.mil). We are located in the Joint Forces

Headquarters Building at the Air National Guard base, 2433 NW 24th St, Lincoln, NE 68524. I will be replaced by Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie Frazier on Sept. 1. Also, 1st Lt. Nick Curto is no longer the Tri-Care manager. This position is now assigned to Staff Sgt. Travis Garrett. His number is (402) 309-1541. Contact him for all your Tri-Care related questions. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

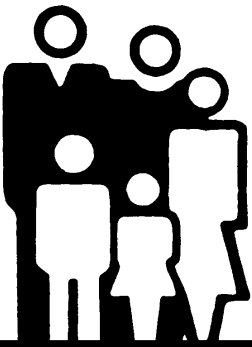
# Nebraska Military Department hosts first-ever Pride Month 'lunch and learn' session

By Sgt. Heidi Krueger  
Staff Photojournalist

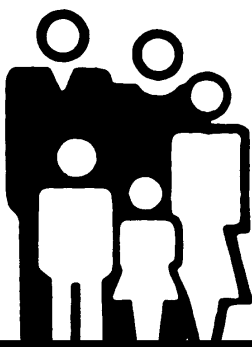
In recognition of June's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month, Nebraska Military Department employees and members were invited to attend a panel discussion 'lunch and learn' session featuring people associated with the Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of Omaha, June 27, at the Operations Auditorium on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb. The lunch and learn panel discussion, hosted by the Nebraska National Guard Special Emphasis Program, started with a presentation on what PFLAG is and what they do. Panel members then shared personal and touching stories with the group, which was then followed up by questions and answers. "We kind of changed our tag line a little bit because we have found that we also have a whole spectrum of orientations and sexual identities that we help support," said Joni Stacy, a member of PFLAG Omaha that conducted the presentation. "So we adopted a new tag line, 'Parents, Families and Friends of Allies united with LGBT people.'" "There are 363 chapters across the country," added Stacy. "And we have a three-prong mission: support, advocacy and education." PFLAG Omaha promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends by supporting people as

they learn to cope with an adverse society; by educating the public; and by advocating for an end to discrimination with the goal of securing equal civil rights. According to the attendees, they enjoyed learning about all the different activities PFLAG does along with how to understand the issues affecting people of different orientations and sexual identities. There are four chapters in the state of Nebraska; Omaha, Lincoln, Hastings and Kearney, said Stacy, adding that if people have any questions, they shouldn't hesitate contacting one of these chapters. The personal stories told by members of the panel helped Nebraska Military Department employees begin to understand how hard it was, and still is, for service members to tell family and friends about their sexual orientation and gender identities. For some people of the LGBT community, this is still a very closely held secret. For others, telling their friends, family and co-workers made a huge difference. "I felt like I could actually have my two lives the same again," said Capt. Evaine Mansfield, an active duty Air Force pilot stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. "I didn't have to have two personalities. And it's been since then that I actually found myself again." "I realized that I actually changed who I was and that wasn't entirely for the good," added Mansfield. "I've been happy and much more productive since I have been able to just be one person."





# Guard Family NEWS You Can Use



## Guard day camp focuses on helping military kids develop leadership, communication, problem-solving skills

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Sixteen Nebraska National Guard military kids had the opportunity to learn some important skills while also having fun when the Nebraska National Guard State Family Program Office hosted a one-day Child and Youth Program day camp, July 23, at the Spirit of 1776 Armory in Lincoln, Neb. According to Kelli Czarnick, lead Child and Youth Program coordinator for the Nebraska National Guard, the day camp was designed to provide military kids with an opportunity to learn about and enhance leadership skills, resiliency and personal development while interacting with other military kids in a positive setting.

“Military-connected youth, particularly Guard and Reserve children, face unique challenges and have unique experiences due to geographic isolation from other military youth, as opposed to children of active duty families who live on or near post,” said Czarnick. “The children need opportunities to enhance (leadership, resiliency and personal development) skills, which increase the resiliency of the youth by giving them basic tools to deal with stress – both proactively and reactively—that they may experience in their everyday lives.”

Czarnick said similar camps were originally planned for Omaha, Kearney and Grand Island in July, however due to a lack of registrations, only the Lincoln-area one was held.

The Lincoln camp featured a number of activities for the participating kids, including a morning physical training session led by two Nebraska Army Guard Soldiers, a nutrition lesson with a dietitian that concluded with having the kids make their own healthy snack, making tie-dyed shirts and ‘paracord’ bracelets, and a session with a military family life consultant on bullying



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Figuring It Out:** A group of military kids put their heads together to solve a problem, July 23, during the one-day Child and Youth Program day camp held at the Nebraska Army National Guard’s ‘Spirit of 1776’ armory in Lincoln. The kids had to successfully move each person through a cube, using different entry and exit points each time.

that concluded with the participating children creating and then presenting skits about bullying.

Following lunch, the kids participated in several activities designed to foster problem-solving, teamwork and communication skills.

Among those participating in the day-long camp was Jaden Rouse, whose father, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Rouse, is the full-time state incentive manager for the Nebraska Army National Guard. Jaden said his favorite activities involved making a tie-dyed shirt and a ‘paracord’ bracelet. Mostly, though, he just enjoyed hanging out with the other kids.

“We’re having fun... a lot of fun,” said Jaden as he put the finishing touches on his multi-colored bracelet with Jett Durante, the son of Maj. Eric and Katie Hunsberger.

Kady McCord, daughter of Sgt. 1st Class Jason and Kim McCord, and Ellianna LaMay, daughter of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brad and Alicia LaMay, agreed.

“We’re having a lot of fun. We just got done doing the cube activity,” said LaMay. “We weren’t allowed to touch the sides, so they picked me up and pushed me through it.”



**Which Way?** Ellianna LeMay attempts to help a blindfolded Jett Durante negotiate his way through a pretend minefield.

“It’s been pretty neat, agreed McCord.

Czarnick said the interaction that was created during the day was exactly what the organizers



**Putting Creativity To The Test:** Jaden Rouse creates a bracelet using multi-colored parachute cord during the one-day Child and Youth Program day camp held July 23 in Lincoln, Neb. The camp was designed to help the children of military parents learn and enhance leadership skills, resiliency and personal development while interacting with other military kids in a positive setting.

had hoped for.

“We hope the youth felt a positive connection to the other military-connected youth, as well as the military overall, and felt like they are a valuable part of not only their own families and communities, but their military families as well,” she said.

“In addition, we hope the children learned new things about themselves, such as ways they communicate with others, ways to problem-solve difficult situations, and that having fun and staying healthy are important to their overall well-being.”

Czarnick said organizers hope to build upon this year’s success. Still, she added, they will need help for that to happen.

“Given that this was the first year we have provided day camps

in the summer, we really hope that families will share information about the program in a positive way with other families who were unable to participate,” she said. “We would like to see the program grow and plan to offer other activities, including possible half- or full-day camps during the school year.”

Czarnick said this may also include holiday and recreation-oriented activities, leadership programs and a teen council.

“Youth have many opportunities to connect with other youth through the program and we are excited about the events we are planning for the future.

For more information about the Nebraska National Guard’s Child and Youth Program, contact Czarnick at (402) 309-7338.

## Lincoln restaurants help keep Guardsmen, families connected

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

A local Lincoln, Neb., restaurant marked its fifth consecutive year of helping keep Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen connected with their families when they donated phone cards to the Nebraska Military Department’s Family Support Program.

According to Pamela Mueri, marketing representative for the local franchise of Raising Canes, this year a total of 536 phones were donated to the “Phones for Troops” program conducted at the business’ two Lincoln restaurants. Those phones were then translated into phone cards that will be distributed to deploying Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen to help them keep connected with their families who remain at home. The restaurant also donated a check to the Family Support Program to

help it with its continuing family support activities.

“Thank you for all that you do for our nation,” said Mueri during the June 13 presentation at the Nebraska Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln. She added that the program was started in Lincoln by Justin and Jennifer Jones, franchise owners, as a way to support Lincoln and Nebraska’s military families.

Brig. Gen. Daryl Bohac, then-deputy adjutant general, represented Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons during the presentation ceremony. Bohac said the donation is an important part of a continuing partnership between the military and the greater Nebraska community that supports it.

“On behalf of our Soldiers and Airmen, but perhaps maybe more importantly their families, thank you because these phone cards keep them connected,” said Bohac. “These kinds of connections between us, you and our communities means our families are stronger.”



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Supporting Guard Families:** Pamela Mueri, marketing representative for the Lincoln, Neb., ‘Raising Canes’ franchise, presents phone cards and a check to Brig. Gen. Daryl Bohac, then-deputy adjutant general, and Lt. Col. Will Prusia, State Family Program coordinator, June 13.



Street Talk

“What is your next goal in your military career?”




**Spc. Erica Cardenas**  
Detachment 1, 1074th Transportation Company

*“To make E-5 (sergeant) and to lead Soldiers in the right direction, like I have been taught.”*

**Spc. Kameron Foss**  
Company A, 1-376th Aviation

*“I plan on finishing out this contract and then going on to active duty. I’d like to put in 20 years in the active Air Force.”*






**Senior Airman Hillary Dolan**  
155th Communications Flight

*“I am working on my five-level and (career development courses). That’s my first goal, to get those done before school starts.”*

**Pfc. Jose Audelo**  
1075th Transportation Company

*“To go infantry and go to airborne school.”*





**Staff Sgt. Aaron Tritsch**  
155th Maintenance Squadron

*“I am just trying to reenlist for another six years. Hopefully within the next six I’ll get (technical sergeant) and a technician spot out here.”*

**Senior Airman Caitlin Price**  
155th Mission Support Group

*“Pin on staff (sergeant). I’m hoping to get my seven-level soon, then cross-train.”*



We will continue to do amazing things

I am honored and humbled to have been selected by Governor Dave Heineman to be the 33rd Adjutant General of the Nebraska Military Department.

I am excited to be in this position and to lead the organization

I cannot emphasize enough the pride I have in the Nebraska Army National Guard, the Nebraska Air National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. You are an amazing force that brings much to bear in the defense of the nation and in service to the citizens of Nebraska.

During the first 30-plus days of my tenure as your adjutant general, I have had the privilege of dedicating the brand new Mead-Atlas Readiness Center, the newly refurbished East Campus Readiness Center, embark on a four-day visit to Western Nebraska and visit with the 170th Group full-time staff at Offutt Air Force Base.

Each of these events has provided me with insight into the pride

The Adjutant General

Major General  
Daryl Bohac



Sgt. Green the readiness noncommissioned officer. In my opinion, this was even better than talking to me. Both are articulate, sharp Soldiers and represented the Nebraska National Guard very well.

our team has for our mission: to prepare and deliver combat ready forces in defense of our nation and stand ready to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the state.

As we move in to a period of fewer Army National Guard mobilizations and deployments, we need to be engaged with our communities. We need to tell our story of service to our state and nation. That is why during a four-day Western Nebraska tour I met with the civic leadership in each of the communities where we have readiness centers and also made myself available to local newspapers and radio stations.

While in Sidney, Neb., the reporter asked if she could talk to Staff Sgt. Rowley, one of our Army National Guard recruiters and Staff

Staff Sgt. Rowley hit it out of the park when she said, “It’s not about what the community can do for the Guard, it’s about what the Guard can do for the community.”

This is the very essence of what we are about and it places the emphasis in the right place – on the organization and those we serve.

I am firmly wedded to the principle that the organization must come first, followed closely by the individual. If we don’t take care of the organization, there will be nothing for the individual.

I salute each of you, our Soldiers, Airmen and civilian employees who serve our state and nation. We have an amazing team and we will continue to do amazing things.

—Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac  
“Here to Serve!”

Telling our stories to be key as National Guard enters new era

So, is this going to be the new normal for the National Guard?

That seems to be the question many are asking as the organization transitions from a war-time footing filled with constant mobilizations and deployments into a new posture in which mobilizations and deployments continue, but at a slower pace. Add in the element of budgetary austerity and suddenly it begins to feel a lot like the mid-1990s again.

That’s why back here in Nebraska, one of the questions senior staff members have been asking themselves is, how do we, as an organization, deal with this new normal?

How do we build upon our past successes and maintain our posture as an operational reserve as we shift back into a posture that more resembles the traditional Guard that many, like myself, grew up in during the 1990s?

And, if that is indeed our future, how do we continue to maintain the level of state-wide community support that we’ve enjoyed these past dozen years?

One answer, as Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac points out in his first column as adjutant general, is to continue to tell our story.

When you look back upon the years since the terrible tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, it’s hard not to be extremely impressed. The members of this organization – both Army and Air – really have accomplished some major and incredible feats, both overseas and back here in the United States. Among these accomplishments are:

- Flying the first air refueling missions in support of the first-ever combat air patrols over the continental United States on Sept. 11, 2001;
- Helping build the “air bridge” over the Atlantic Ocean as the U.S. prepared to launch what would become known as Operation Enduring Freedom against al Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan;
- Providing important air refueling support during patrols above the Winter Olympics in Utah;
- Deploying thousands of Sol-

My Turn

Editor, Prairie Soldier  
Kevin J. Hynes



public affairs support, and recruiting and retention efforts.

Like I said, the work the men and women of the Nebraska National Guard have put in over the past decade-plus has been simply remarkable and it’s hard not to see

that this level of effort won’t continue on into the foreseeable future.

One thing has changed, though: Our ability to continue to tell our amazing story.

As deployments and mobilizations slow down, the opportunity to tell our stories to our local and state-wide communities may also taper off because we won’t be hosting as many farewell and welcome home ceremonies.

Instead, we have to find – or rather rediscover – new ways to tell our stories, to reintroduce ourselves to our local communities.

That’s why I said it seems a lot like the mid-1990s when we spent the majority of our time telling our stories through our work during annual training and drill weekend exercises. That’s probably exactly what we must do again.

Over the past decade-plus, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Army and Air National Guard have proven time and time again that the National Guard really is a capable, professional force, ready to take on whatever mission comes its way and accomplish it in ways next to none.

Telling our story will probably be the key to ensuring that the Guard continues to be considered a major part of this nation’s operational reserve for the foreseeable future.

And telling that story, whenever and wherever we’re given the opportunity, is the responsibility of each and every one of us.

Take pride in what you and the Nebraska National Guard have accomplished. Tell people about the pride you feel in being part of an organization that has an important role to play, both nationally and here locally in Nebraska.

Tell people about your training, about your missions, about the things you’ve gained from being a member of the Guard.

It really is a story that we should all consider worth sharing.



PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard  
Colonel

Georgia K. Kroese

Major

Chad E. Thomson

Captain

Cason T. Bock  
Amanda L. Homes  
Jason A. Kivett  
Joyce B. Schlickbernd  
David M. Stoltenberg

Chief Warrant Officer 3

Joseph R. Amen  
James C. Hurley Jr.  
Craig W. Niemeyer

Chief Warrant Officer 2

Steven J. Stienike

Sergeant First Class

Christopher S. Deters  
Sebastian C. Nastase  
Lindsay D. Rodysill

Staff Sergeant

James B. Benal  
Jacob D. Foutz  
James R. Franson  
Matthew R. Lamb  
Nathan F. Mihm  
Robert E. Sherard Jr.  
Ty S. Tucker  
Alisha S. Wagner  
Monty R. Worster

Sergeant

Leon C. Baker  
Christopher L. Borreson  
Candice M. Carr  
Vance. G. Coltrane  
Mark A. Duncan  
Tracy L. Gates  
Tyler J. Holton  
Luke J. Kelley

Michelle K Lindgren  
Manuel S. Molina  
Joshua C. Stollberg  
James A. White

Specialist

Tanner J. Bramman  
Nathaniel C. Czapl  
Quinten J. L. S. Evans  
Timothy A. Foster  
Jordan T. Hopwood  
Matthew R. Jankovitz  
Brent A. Koenigsman  
Tyler J. Miller  
Zachary P. Noonan  
Kurt F. Ruh  
Matthew M. Ryan  
Lindsey B. Smith  
Jacobi D. Spencer  
William L. A. Werner

Private First Class

Bryce T. Davis  
Kory K. Dearie  
John M. Gargan  
Casey S. Harris  
Kyle L. Hemphill  
Dylan J. Hergenradar  
Miranda J. Hunt  
Rainier S. L. Juaneza  
Raul A. Martinez  
Beau R. Muehling  
Manuel V. Perez  
Jorge Rodriguez  
Anastasia L. Sacco  
Steven E. Svitak  
Brandon L. Trueblood

Private 2

Alec W. Britten  
Thomas J. Curry

Air National Guard  
Colonel

Robert E. Hargens

Lieutenant Colonel

Jacob J. Link  
Sheryl R. Wohleb

Major

Christopher L. Ganshert  
John E. Loken  
Jason. P Newham

Captain

Edwin L. Martens  
Melissa Miller

First Lieutenant

Aaron J.W. Chalmstrom

Second Lieutenant

Myron A. Acosta

Kyle J. Linden  
Lance G. Parra

Chief Master Sergeant

Randal W. Eickmeier  
Leighton C. Michaelson  
Matthew J. Mittelstadt

Senior Master Sergeant

Rebecca P. Boddicker  
Michael L. Mayfield

Master Sergeant

Jeffery K. Martin

Technical Sergeant

Ryan L. Armes  
Robert J. Robinette

Kevin B. Zuver

Staff Sergeant

Peter J. Grossrhode  
Corbin J. Hamernik  
Evan W. Hanlin  
Jessica L. Helmink  
Arin E. Kudlacek  
Kent T. Kuta  
Roman P. Nelson  
Zachary B. Pollard  
Jon Schon  
Ricky C. Tague  
Vey Van Thach  
Joshua J. Triplette  
Aaron M. Tritsch  
Patrick W. Turner  
Bryce D. Whalen

Danielle N. Winkle

Senior Airman

Alonzo A. Blount  
Kyle D. Dougherty  
Matthew F. Spieker  
Nicolas P. Tenhulzen

Airman First Class

Zachary M. Allen  
Jacob S. Miller

Airman

Reiny Dickhaut  
Amanda M. Hohnstein  
Tyler Peterson  
Brett F. Schutte

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal

Sgt. Sean Keith Chastain

Army Commendation Medal

Capt. Cason T. Bock  
Capt. Clinton F. Brady  
Capt. Clayton W. Engleman  
Capt. Christopher J. Hansen  
Capt. Monty R. Zeiler  
Sgt. 1st Class Andrew J. Hytrek  
Staff Sgt. Jessie A. London  
Sgt. Nathan J. Bornemeier  
Sgt. Andrew G. Jarvis  
Sgt. Enrique Rodriguez  
Sgt. Josiah A. Smith  
Spec. Clinton D. Fauss  
Spec. Jordan K. Goehring

Combat Action Badge

Spec. Jordan K. Goehring

Army Achievement Medal

Staff Sgt. Adren W. Uhlig

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey J. Wagner  
Sgt. Dakota A. Kingham  
Sgt. Amy S. Kuehn  
Sgt. Timothy A. Smallcomb  
Spec. Kaio J. Uhing  
Pfc. Tara B. Benak

Nebraska National Guard Individual  
Achievement Medal

2nd Lt. Benjamin S. Skelton  
Master Sgt. James L. Gross  
Sgt. 1St Class Adam C. Junck  
Sgt. 1st Class Lacey J. Kollath  
Sgt. 1st Class Penny F. Winterburn  
Staff Sgt. Joshua H. Birkel  
Staff Sgt. David D. Dettwiller  
Staff Sgt. Loren B. Eaton  
Staff Sgt. Sam D. Lanka  
Staff Sgt. Chad M. Pokorney  
Staff Sgt. Walter R. Shumate  
Staff Sgt. Sonja S. Zerr  
Sgt. Jordan M. Annen  
Sgt. Colton J. Courter  
Sgt. Adam J. Debock

Sgt. Nickolas R. Hansen  
Sgt. Christopher M. Kruger  
Sgt. Trevor J. Kurtzhals  
Sgt. Isvi S. Machuca  
Sgt. John L. Monheiser  
Sgt. Ryan A. Pella  
Sgt. Daniel J. Wardyn  
Sgt. Jessica J. Wetzel  
Sgt. Matthew S. Wonder  
Sgt. Ashley W. Woundedarrow  
Spec. Kayla M. Bledso  
Spec. Russell A. Glassmeyer

Spec. Andres Lara  
Spec. Nolan W. McCulley  
Spec. Nancy L. Rayaparra  
Spec. Trevor M. Stahlecker  
Spec. Zachery C. Swahn  
Spec. Alexandre Tschampdiesing  
Spec. Jordan M. White  
Pfc. Bryce T. Davis  
Pfc. Kyle E. Potter  
Pfc. Brandon L. Trueblood  
Pfc. Levi J. White

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

Col. Michael L. Deger  
Command Sgt. Maj. Leon D. Haith  
Sgt. 1st Class Kelvin M. Posvar  
Staff Sgt. Michael J. Caha  
Sgt. Jerry J. Karmazin  
Sgt. Katherine S. Nolan

Sgt. Anthony D. Revas

TAPS

Staff Sgt. Jesse Meints

Shorttakes

Familiar face takes helm at Camp Ashland regiment

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) welcomed a familiar face back into their ranks while wishing farewell to an outgoing commander who led them to new academic heights, Aug. 10, when Col. Kevin Lyons assumed command of the Camp Ashland-based organization from Col. Mark Stockstell.

Standing in the historic Memorial Hall where several new, multicolored banners proclaimed the 209th RTI as an “Institute of Excellence,” Lyons, who had served in several leadership roles within the organization in the past, accepted the regimental colors from Brig. Gen. Michael Navrkal in front of a formation of RTI Soldiers.

The 209th RTI, which serves as the primary schoolhouse organization for the Nebraska Army National Guard, consists of three battalions dedicated to regional noncommissioned officer leadership development courses, officer and warrant officer commissioning programs, and a U.S. Army truck driving school.

According to Navrkal, assistant adjutant general, Army, Stockstell made significant contributions to the organization since assuming command in 2011. In thanking the colonel’s family for the sacrifices they made during Stockstell’s tenure Navrkal said: “He made a huge difference in our organization and individually in the lives of these Soldiers who stand here today.”

Navrkal said that is particularly evident in the banners that now hang in Memorial Hall, designating the 209th organizations as “Institutes of Excellence.” “That is not a small deal. That is extremely important,” he said. “It’s important to us as a state, it’s important to us as a nation because the primary mission of this command is the development of our leaders. And there’s nothing more important than developing our Soldiers and our leaders.”

“Mark, you and your command have done a tremendous at accomplishing that,” he added.

Stockstell enlisted in the U.S. Army in May 1979, serving as a

signals intelligence analyst for the 372nd Army Security Agency at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in June 1983 as a member of Company A, 2-134th Infantry.

Stockstell earned his commission in July 1985 after graduating from the Camp Ashland-based Officer Candidate School. He has since served in a variety of leadership positions including rifle platoon leader, company executive officer, and company commander of Co. A, 2-134th Infantry. He also served in a variety of battalion-level and state-level staff positions before serving as the commander of the 126th Chemical Battalion, director of Facilities Engineering and deputy chief of staff for Logistics.

Stockstell also deployed to Afghanistan where he served as the regional police advisory commander for RC-East/Afghanistan.

Stockstell and his wife, Tara, live in Hamburg, Iowa. They have four children.

In leaving the 209th RTI, Stockstell said he is proud of what the organization accomplished during his tenure.

“Hopefully, I’ve met your expectations and met the challenges,” said Stockstell to the members of the Nebraska National Guard command staff present at the ceremony.

One of those challenges, said Stockstell, came early on when each battalion within the organization was inspected to ensure they were meeting accreditation guidelines. “This was the first time in history each program was assessed and each program achieved the highest award through that validation process as an Institute of Excellence,” he said. “That’s no small achievement... an achievement that was made by the Soldiers standing in front of you here today, and a lot of other Soldiers who are not with us today.”

Stockstell said achieving that recognition took a lot of dedicated, hard work by the member of the RTI staff. “So, my heartfelt thanks go out to you, the Soldiers in front of me.



**Accepting The Regimental Colors:** Col. Kevin Lyons accepts the colors of the Camp Ashland-based 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) from Brig. Gen. Michael Navrkal, Aug. 10, at Camp Ashland’s Memorial Hall. Lyons, who had served in a variety of past positions within the RTI, assumed command of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s primary educational institute from outgoing commander, Col. Mark Stockstell.



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Final Comments:** Col. Mark Stockstell addresses the crowd shortly after relinquishing command of the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), Aug. 10, at Camp Ashland, Neb.

You are an outstanding group. You take your mission seriously. And you all lead by example.”

The 209th RTI’s new commander is no stranger to that mission, either. Lyons, who serves as the superintendent of schools at St. Edward Public Schools in St. Edward, Neb., also served in several leadership posts

at the Camp Ashland institute.

Lyons’ military career began in 1986 when he enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard’s Headquarters, 1-195th Armor Battalion, as a tank crew man. He received his commission from the Nebraska National Guard Military Academy in 1989 and was then as-

signed to Fremont’s Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry.

Lyons has subsequently served as a scout and tank platoon leader, troop executive officer, assistant tactical intelligence officer and assistant squadron operations officer. He served as commander of the Troop A, 1-167th Cav., before being reassigned to the 209th RTI in 2001, serving there as a teach, assess and counsel (TAC) officer, assistant operations officer and operations officer.

Lyons deployed with the 209th RTI to Afghanistan in 2005 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where he initially served as the commander/mentor of the Advanced Individual Training Brigade of the Afghanistan National Army at the Kabul Military Training Center at Kabul, Afghanistan. He later served as the operations officer for the Training Assistance

Group where he had the additional duty as mentor to the Kabul Military Center’s Operations-Training and Education Officer.

Lyons commanded the 2nd Bn., 209th RTI from 2007-08. He later served as the operations officer for the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, as commander of the Nebraska Army Guard’s premobilization assistance team, and state mobilization officer before serving as the senior training officer for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Lyons and his wife, Amy Jo, live in Columbus, Neb. They have five children.

Lyons said he was excited to be able to return to the RTI as its commander. “It’s been a dream of mine for a long time,” said Lyons, who was accompanied to the ceremony by members of his family and the St. Edwards Public School administration. “I was a major in this organization. I was a lieutenant colonel in this organization and I look forward to the opportunity to put my footprint next to Colonel Stockstell’s.”

“He’s done a great job out here. He has given us a great path for the way forward,” Lyons added.



# Soldiers, Airmen take aim at shooting glory

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

“The first thing I do is say a prayer,” said Sgt. Luke J. Kelley, 267th Ordnance Company. “Second, I block everything else out and focus on the job.”

This is what goes through Kelley’s mind as he approaches the line just prior to shooting his weapon.

Recently, Kelley joined more than 170 Guardsmen from across Nebraska as they competed in this year’s Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise. The exercise, also known as the TAG Shoot, took place Aug. 9-11 at the Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

This was Kelley’s fourth year competing in the exercise and, just like in years past, Kelley’s performance did not disappoint.

After three long days of competing against some of the best shooters the state has to offer, Kelley won both the Gary Anderson Trophy and the State Command Sergeant Major Match trophy for his superior performance.

“It feels good,” said Kelley shortly after being presented numerous medals and plaques for his performance. “It’s a lot of hard work, more than people think. It takes a lot of experience and practice.”

According to event organizers, the yearly Nebraska National Guard exercise is an opportunity for Soldiers and Airmen from across the state to put time and training in with their weapons while testing their skills against other competitors.

Over the three-day exercise, competitors took part in eight different events. Of those, five were individual shooting matches, two were team matches and one was a plate match.

At the end of each match, the targets were taken down and scored. To keep competitors honest, the shooters were not allowed to score their own target. Instead, a different shooter was entrusted to tally hits, scoring each individual hit based upon where the bullet struck the target.

The exercise, open to all Army and Air National Guard members in the state, is designed to combine the four elements of the Ground Combat Power Doctrine: maneuver, firepower, protection and leadership.

“It’s a more relaxed environment than the yearly qualification,” said Staff Sgt. Brian P. Wemhoff, 1075th Transportation Co. “It gives you the chance to shoot a diverse set of lanes such, as the Known Distance Range

## Annual state marksmanship exercise gives Guardsmen opportunity to train, compete



Photo by Sgt. Riley Huskey

**On Target:** Sgt. Luke J. Kelley, 267th Ordnance Company, fires down range during the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenleaf Training Site, Aug. 9-11. Kelley was one of more than 170 Guardsman at the competition.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Ready... Aim...** Competitors fire from the prone position during an event. The exercise consisted of eight total events; five individual matches, two team matches, and one plate match.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Making Progress:** A Nebraska Army National Guard competitor checks the grouping of his shots during the zeroing portion of the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise. Participants were given just 12 rounds to successfully zero their weapons.

and the Pistol Range.”

Of the 174 competitors, 162 were Soldiers and 12 were Airmen.

“There used to be 300-400 participants each year in the 1990s,” said

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Todd A. Wagner, state marksmanship director and match coordinator. “The number has decreased due to wars and alternative missions.”

Although the number of competitors has increased in recent years, the number is still far too low, given all the advantages gained from participating.

“I learn more here in one week-end than in six years of service,” said Sgt. Parry W. Siebenaler, 1075th Trans. Co. “Marksmanship is an important skill that gets overlooked a lot. Shooting once or twice a year isn’t enough. It’s a perishable skill.”

During the course of the competition, each participant shot approximately 130 rounds of 9 mm ammunition and more than 200 rounds of 5.56 mm. rounds.

In addition to shooting substantially more rounds than a Guardsman might in a normal year, there are also numerous veteran shooters at the exercise, from whom younger shooters are encouraged to pick for knowledge and experience.

“I don’t understand why everyone doesn’t participate,” said Kelley. “It’s great training and there is nothing better than getting paid to shoot.”

For those concerned that they’re not experienced enough or qualified to participate in the competition, event coordinators and competitors say not to worry. The exercise has shooters from both ends of the skills and experience spectrum.

“Don’t worry about your skill level,” said Siebenaler. “Just come out, have fun and attach yourself to an experienced shooter to learn from.”

Among the numerous first-year competitors was Staff Sgt. Aaron M. Tritsch, 155th Air Refueling Wing. Not only was it Tritsch’s first time competing, he was also one of just twelve Airmen at Greenleaf participating in the exercise.

“We’re small, but mighty,” said Tritsch. “In past years, the Air Guard had one or two teams competing. This year we have four.”

Like many others, Tritsch believes the TAG Shoot is an important event that every Guardsman should want to participate in.

“It helps show, as Guardsman, we can still hold our own against active duty,” said Tritsch.

If that isn’t enough motivation to want to compete, there is also the opportunity to participate in national competitions.

Following the state contest, the captains from the top teams get together and choose Soldiers and Airmen to represent Nebraska in a national competition held at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Ark.

To better prepare for the exercise, Kelley suggests studying the match bulletin and shooting as often as possible. If unable to get to a range and shoot, Kelley recommends dry firing.

In addition to all the effort given by the shooters, a lot of hard work

**See SHOOTERS on 25.**

## Female Soldiers form team, compete at annual marksmanship competition

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

Once a year Soldiers and Airmen from across the state gather to showcase their shooting skills during the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise, also known as the TAG Shoot.

This year’s exercise was held at Greenleaf Training Site, Aug. 9-11.

Historically, male Soldiers and Airmen dominate the field of competitors. That’s not to say there aren’t any female participants. This year’s competition garnered nearly 20 female competitors, eight of whom joined together to form two separate all-female shooting teams.

“I heard a few years ago only two female Soldiers participated at the event,” said

Sgt. 1st Class Maren G. Stewart, marketing noncommissioned officer for Nebraska Army Guard’s Recruiting and Retention Command. “We wanted to show other Soldiers that females are more than capable of holding our own against male Soldiers.”

Stewart was one of four members of team ‘Scared Hitless.’ The rest of the team was comprised of Sgt. 1st Class Melessa Dasenbrock, materials management supervisor for Joint Force Headquarters, Sgt. Amber J. Gralheer, 402nd Military Police Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Erin D. Youngblood, administration sergeant for Joint Force Headquarters.

Prior to forming the team, the members of Scared Hitless were not too familiar with one another, although they knew of each other. The Soldiers said that definitely changed during the course of preparing for the competition.

**See WOMEN on 25.**



Photo by Sgt. Riley Huskey

**Looking To Make Their Mark:** Team ‘Scared Hitless’ was one of two all-female teams to compete at this year’s Nebraska National Guards Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenleaf Training Site, Aug. 9-11. The team consisted of Sgt. Amber J. Gralheer, Sgt. 1st Class Maren G. Stewart, Staff Sgt. Erin D. Youngblood, and Sgt. 1st Class Melessa Dasenbrock.





Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Adjustments:** Spc. Ana Androyna, 1075th Transportation Company, adjusts her sights during the zeroing portion of the annual TAG Shoot held at the Greenlief Training Site. Androyna was a member of one of the two all-female teams at the exercise.



Photo by Sgt. Riley Huskey

**Putting Marksmanship Skills To The Test:** Competitors shoot at the Known Distance Range during one of eight matches during the annual TAG Shoot held at the Greenlief Training Site, near Hastings, Neb.. Throughout the entire exercise, shooters fired approximately 130 rounds of 9mm and more than 200 rounds of 5.59mm rounds.

SHOOTERS continued from page 24.

went on behind the scenes to ensure the event went off with as few hitches as possible. Approximately 111 support personnel were needed for the exercise. During the three-day event, support staff could be found helping with a wide array of tasks such as range control, manning medical stations, transporting shooters or hard at work back in the offices.

“A lot of work goes into the event,” said Wagner. “Next month we’ll start preparing for next year’s competition. Support staff will start planning for supplies, ammo, targets and prepping ranges.”

Without a doubt, the exercise could not have been as successful as it was without all the hard work and knowledge of those who supported the mission.

After the long weekend came to a close and all the rounds had

been fired, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, state command sergeant major, recognized those who outperformed the rest of the field.

Kelley was awarded the Gary Anderson Trophy for having the highest combined aggregate in both the 221 and 321 Excellence in Competition Matches; and won the State Command Sergeant Major Match for having the highest combined aggregate scores in the Service Rifle and Service Pistol disciplines.

In the team competitions, team ‘AVN Gold’ was awarded the Adjutant General’s Combat Team trophy for being the top overall team. The team members consisted of Sgt. 1st Class Brian Blankenship, Capt. Brent Wiese, Staff Sgt. John Walker and Spc. Austin Kucera.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Top Gun:** Sgt. Luke J. Kelley, 267th Ordnance Company, holds the Gary Anderson Trophy and the State Command Sergeant Major Match trophy for being the top overall shooter.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Championship Hardware:** Team ‘AVN Gold’ was awarded the Adjutant General’s Combat Team trophy for being the top overall team. The team members consisted of Sgt. 1st Class Brian Blankenship, Capt. Brent Wiese, Staff Sgt. John Walker and Spc. Austin Kucera.



Photos by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Taking Aim:** Spc. Ana Androyna, 1075th Transportation Co., looks down her sights during a shooting match during the annual TAG Shoot held at the Greenlief Training Site, near Hastings, Neb., Aug. 9.

WOMEN continued from page 24.

“Participating in the exercise is a great way to meet and bond with other female Soldiers,” said Youngblood. “We have relied on one another as a support system and used the exercise as an opportunity to connect with each other.”

Although most of the Soldiers had participated in the exercise as members of the support staff in the past, this year marked the first time any of them had competed. “We all have our different strengths and weaknesses,” said Dasenbrock. “We balance each other out and rely on one another’s strengths.”

In the weeks leading up to the

shooting competition, the team took extra time to ready themselves for the matches. “We prepared by working with experienced shooters, such as Col. Tom Brewer,” said Youngblood. “We relearned the fundamentals and took the opportunity to better ourselves as shooters.”

Although this year’s competition was their first, Scared Hitless did set realistic goals for themselves. Most said they simply wanted to use the weekend to familiarize themselves with the matches, draw from the knowledge of veteran shooters and to preform to the best of their abilities.



**How Did I Do?** Sgt. Amber J. Gralheer, 402nd Military Police Battalion, checks her grouping during the zeroing portion of the annual TAG Shoot held at the Greenlief Training Site, Aug. 9.

When the competition came to a close, team Scared Hitless finished near the bottom of the overall team standings. And although their score may not have been as high as they would have liked, the experiences and knowledge gained far outweighed the final score.

“This year was more of an assessment,” said Stewart. “Next year we’ll be here to win.”

The women also say they hope to see more female faces in the crowd of competitors. “We’re excited to pass on our knowledge and encourage other women to participate,” said Youngblood.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Waiting His Turn:** A Soldier waits on line for a match to begin during the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise, held at the Greenlief Training Site, Aug. 9-11.





**The Long, Uncurving Road:** More than 200 runners pound the pavement as they head out toward the half-way point of the annual KFOR and Adjutant General's Thunder Run 5-kilometer race, Aug. 10. The annual race features one of the more unique courses on the annual Lincoln, Neb., racing circuit: running along a deserted taxiway near the Lincoln Municipal Airport and the Nebraska National Guard air base.



**And They're Off!** Kids of all ages explode out onto the 1-mile course during the annual KFOR and Adjutant General's Thunder Run, held Aug. 10 near the Lincoln Municipal Airport and the Nebraska National Guard air base.

# Thunder on the Tarmac

■ Hundreds take in air base sights during annual Thunder Run races

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

More than 430 runners of all shapes and sizes brought thunder to a Lincoln, Neb., taxiway, Aug. 10, when the Nebraska National Guard, in conjunction with KFOR radio, hosted the annual Adjutant General's Thunder Run 5-kilometer and 1-mile races.

Running beneath nearly picture-perfect skies, 153 athletes – mostly school-aged children – completed the 1-mile course, while 278 runners crossed the finish line of the 5-kilometer race.

“Overall, the races went really well,” said Chief Master Sgt. Sue Spence, a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters staff who coordinated the run with KFOR radio and the Lincoln Track Club. “The weather was absolutely perfect. We probably could’ve used a little more breeze, but, other than that, we couldn’t have asked for better weather.”

The Thunder Run is an annual race designed to encourage physical fitness while also helping build community ties. Along with running

the unique out-and-back course along one of the Lincoln Municipal Airport’s taxiways, runners and their families also had a chance to check out Nebraska Army and Air National Guard equipment to include a KC-135R Stratotanker, UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, an Air Guard fire truck and 72nd Civil Support Team vehicles.

Winning this year’s 1-mile race was Sam Hellbusch, 10, who completed the flat, concrete course in 6:39.

Winning the male 5-kilometer race was Neil Wolford, 25, a teacher at Bryan Community Focus of the Lincoln Public School System. This marked Wolford’s first win after finishing second at last year’s Thunder Run.

“I thought it was good,” said Wolford, who completed the course in 15:27. “The weather was great. It’s cool enough that you didn’t have to douse yourself in water.”

According to Wolford, who barely beat Colin Morrissey by a second, the key to this year’s race was the conditioning he’s put in throughout the summer. “My training’s been going really well the last year,” he said. “I’ve also avoided getting hurt, so



**Winning Form:** Sam Hellbusch, 10, uses the last of his strength to sprint the final steps of the 1-mile race, Aug. 10, during the annual KFOR and Adjutant General's Thunder Run. Hellbusch completed the race in 6:39.

I’m in really good shape right now.”

“The second place guy, Colin Morrissey, we had a really good race going on. We really pushed each other.”

Taking the women’s race was Frankie Petersen, 31, a Science teacher at Lincoln South East High School. According to Petersen, who had never competed at the Thunder Run, the weather definitely helped her to the win.

“It was great weather. It’s nice and cool,” said Petersen, who re-



**Battling To The Finish Line:** Neil Wolford and Colin Morrissey battle down the 5-kilometer course, step-by-step as they each try to win the annual KFOR and Adjutant General's Thunder Run. Wolford won this year's race with a time of 15:27.



**Congratulations:** Brig. Gen. Jon Fago, Nebraska Air National Guard chief of staff, congratulates a runner on her effort at the finish line of the 5-kilometer race, Aug. 10. According to race coordinators, a total of 278 runners crossed the finish line at this year's KFOR and Adjutant General's Thunder Run.

corded a race of 18:37. “I’ve not done this race before because it’s been so hot.”

According to Petersen, who normally trains by pushing her toddler son in his stroller while running, she entered this year’s race unsure of what to expect. “I just wanted to kind of see how it

goes,” said Petersen, adding that the unique nature of the Thunder Run did add some mental components to the race. “It seems longer when you can see the whole course.”

“I do most of my runs pushing my toddler in his stroller, so I felt pretty fast to not be pushing him,” Petersen added laughing.



# Golden Guardsmen

## ■Nebraska warrant officer hits bullseyes at archery competitions

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Tollie Yoder admits he’s always been interested in archery ever since he first picked up a Recurve bow in grade school. Yet, like most people, that interest never translated into much more than that. “I never lost interest, per se. I just never really had much time... life happened and you have to choose your priorities,” said Yoder, recently.

However, a few years ago, Yoder said that as his eldest son, Noah, grew older, he started looking around for some type of outdoor event that would allow the two of them to spend more time together. So, he decided to, let’s say, ‘give it a shot.’

“I thought shooting sports of some sort would be a blast and I chose archery,” said Yoder, a Nebraska Army National Guard chief warrant officer two who serves as the full-time equipment specialist with the Nebraska National Guard’s Surface Maintenance Manager’s Office in Lincoln, Neb. “We got involved in a local Junior Olympic Archery Development program. This program did a very good job of teaching us a shooting form and training us for competitions.”

That training paid off as Yoder recently earned two gold medals during the annual Cornhusker State Games held in Lincoln, Omaha and surrounding areas in July.

Shooting an Olympic-style Recurve bow, Yoder earned first place in the Two-Day Shoot/ Male Adult-Olympic Freestyle Limited and the One-Day Shoot/Male Adult-Olympic Freestyle Limited contest.

Yoder, who began competing in archery competitions about three years ago, said he was amazed by his performance.



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Fruits Of His Labor:** Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tollie Yoder shows off the two Cornhusker State Games gold medals he won in archery this year.

“I was very surprised,” he said. “There are a lot of really talented archers shooting during that weekend. I was very pleased with my performance. I set some personal goals and stayed on track with my mental shooting game and fell back onto my training.”

Complicating matters was the fact that the Cornhusker State Games’ events were the first time that Yoder had ever shot competitively outdoors.

“The local archery clubs around the area hold archery tournaments throughout the year,” Yoder said. “Normally, I only focus on indoor shooting tournaments during the winter months.”

Yoder said the 10-15 tournaments he competes in annually typically involve shooting at a known distance of 18 meters, during which archers are given four minutes to shoot five arrows.

Each arrow, he added, is worth five points.

“You try to score as many points as you can and beat your competition, but it is easier said than done,” said Yoder.

Yoder said that he first learned about the Cornhusker State Games’



**Practice Makes Perfect:** Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tollie Yoder, practices aiming with his specially made Olympic-style Recurve bow. Yoder, the full-time equipment specialist in the Nebraska National Guard’s Surface Maintenance Manager’s Office in Lincoln, Neb., recently took two gold medals during the annual Cornhusker State Games.

archery competition by word of mouth. Originally, Yoder said he and his two sons hoped to compete together, making it a family event. Noah, who recently won a state archery championship in his age division, however, was competing in the baseball competition, while Jake, who has also won several archery events, had a broken arm. So, Yoder was on his own.

Held July 27-28 at the Lincoln Prairie Bowman Archery Club, the two-day event consisted of shooting a total 75 arrows per day, or 25 each at the 40, 50 and 60 yard distances. The one-day event mirrored the

two-day event.

According to Yoder, his early involvement in the indoor events helped prepare him for the rigors of competing outside in the elements.

“I have trained for the past three years to get comfortable enough and strong enough to shoot the outdoor distances,” he said.

“I spent about three-and-a-half weeks of rigorous training to prepare myself mentally and physically,” he added. “Then I spent the last few days trying to fine-tune my bow as close as I could for this specific event.”

Those preparations obviously

paid off as Yoder won the two-day event with a score of 1,089 points, while also winning the one-day competition.

Yoder said that while he enjoyed earning gold in his first Cornhusker State Games competition, probably even more enjoyable was the event itself.

“I really like the feel the Cornhusker State Games gives during the opening ceremony,” he said. “I know it’s not the Olympics, but it kind of gives you that feel with the walking in of the athletes, lighting of the cauldron, and receiving medals on a podium.”

## ■Sergeant major claims two golds at Cornhusker State Games

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

A Nebraska National Guard sergeant major turned a 20-year interest in the annual Cornhusker State Games into double championship results in two decidedly different competitions in July.

Sgt. Maj. Mark Felker, Nebraska Army National Guard state training office sergeant major who also works full-time for the Nebraska National Guard as a real property specialist, placed first in the 50-59 year-old age group 5-kilometer open water swim held July 20 at Holmes Lake near Lincoln, Neb. He followed that up by placing first overall in the July 21 biathlon held at Camp Gargano near Martell, Neb.

According to Felker, he’s always been interested in physical fitness and the Cornhusker State Games, a statewide amateur sports festival designed to provide top-quality amateur competition in a wide range of activities. This year’s July 19-28 competition was conducted at more than 70 sites in Lincoln, Omaha and surrounding communities.

“I’ve been competing in the Cornhusker State Games off and on for over 20 years,” said Felker. This participation has included competing in the triathlon, open water swimming events, marksmanship and the biathlon. “I enjoy the comradeship with other folks from across the state who have similar interests and the competition with superior athletes.”

Felker said he typically runs in the morning and swims in the



**Prairie Runner:** Sgt. Maj. Mark Felker, Nebraska Army National Guard state training office sergeant major, competes in the Cornhusker State Games’ biathlon competition, July 21, at Camp Gargano near Martell, Neb.

evening to get ready for the competition. “Those are activities I enjoy and do just for fun on a daily basis,” he said. “I am also an avid archery, black powder and upland/big game hunter, which requires a degree of marksmanship.”

Those skills and interests definitely came into play during this year’s competition. Following his gold medal performance at the 3-kilometer open water swim, which Felker completed in 1:16:06, he followed that up by entering the next day’s biathlon at Camp Gargano.

According to Felker, the biathlon involves running a mile, followed by shooting at five targets from the prone position. For each target knocked down, 15 seconds are deducted from the competitor’s time.

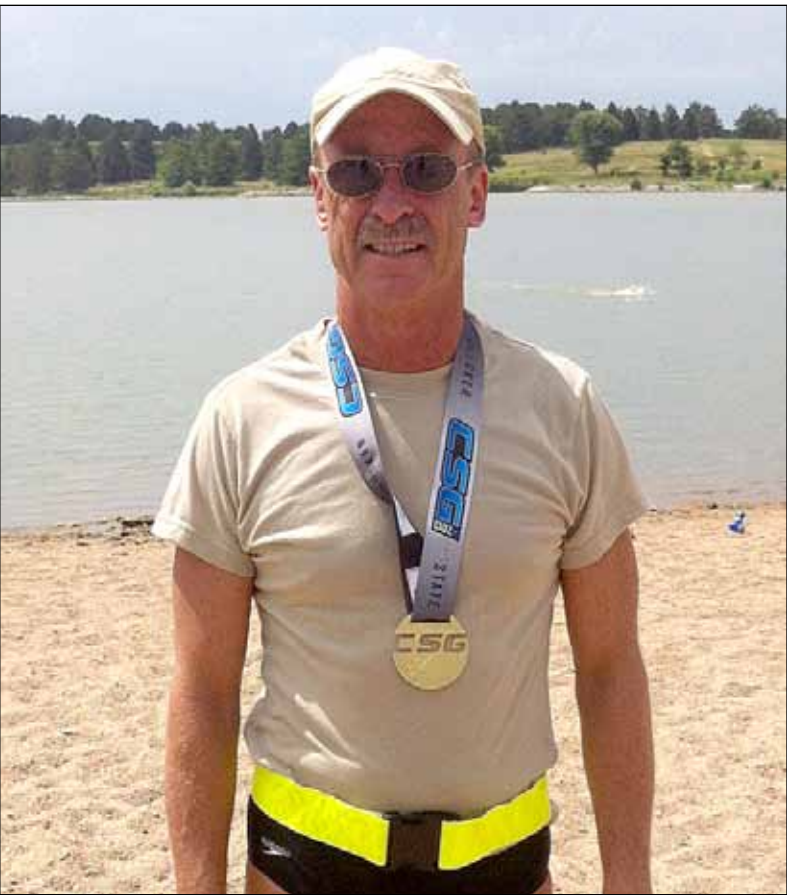
Following the first round of

shooting, the athletes then complete another one-mile run before shooting at five targets from the standing position. For each target knocked down, 30 seconds are deducted from the runner’s time.

The event then concludes with a final one-mile run.

“It’s a real head game,” said Felker. “You really have to focus on bringing your breathing down so that you can successfully shoot at those targets.”

Felker’s discipline definitely paid off. He said that the second place athlete, who at 28-years-old was half Felker’s age, actually ran the three legs of the race a minute faster than he did. However, Felker knocked down three more targets than he did to win the competition by 30 seconds.



Courtesy photos

**Gold Medal Performance:** Sgt. Maj. Mark Felker poses for a photo shortly after winning a gold medal in the Cornhusker State Games’ 3-kilometer open water swim, July 20.

“He was pretty fast, but he tended to want to shoot really fast, too,” Felker said. “I focused really hard on taking my time and making sure that I was getting off good shots. That’s what made the difference in the end.”

Although this wasn’t the first time he’s won two golds at the Cornhusker State Games, it still felt pretty good to achieve that feat this year.

“Yeah,” he said, “it felt pretty good.”